CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

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CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

VOLUME V
The Official
Oxford Conference
Books

THE OFFICIAL OXFORD CONFERENCE BOOKS

1. THE CHURCH AND ITS FUNCTION IN SOCIETY
by Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft and Dr. J. H. Oldham

2. THE CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF MAN
by Prof. T. E. Jessop, Prof. R. L. Calhoun, Prof. N. N. Alexeiev, Prof. Emil Brunner, Pastor Pierre Maury, the Rev. Austin Farrer, Prof. W. M. Horton

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4. CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THE COMMON LIFE
by Nils Ehrenström, Prof. M. Dibelius, Prof. John Bennett, The Archbishop of York, Prof. Reinhold Niebuhr, Prof. H. H. Farmer, Dr. W. Wiesner

5. CHURCH AND COMMUNITY
by Prof. E. E. Aubrey, Prof. E. Barker, Dr. Björkquist, Dr. H. Lilje, Prof. S. Zankov, Dr. Paul Douglass, Prof. K. S. Latourette, M. Boegner

6. CHURCH, COMMUNITY, AND STATE IN RELATION TO EDUCATION
by Prof. F. Clarke, Dr. Paul Monroe, Prof. W. Zenkovsky, C. R. Morris, J. W. D. Smith, " X," Prof. Ph. Kohnstamm, J. H. Oldham

7. THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH AND THE WORLD OF NATIONS
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THE OXFORD CONFERENCE: Official Report
Including the full text of the reports issued by the five sections of the Conference, Oxford, England, 1937. With an introduction by J. H. Oldham

WORLD CHAOS OR WORLD CHRISTIANITY
A popular interpretation of Oxford and Edinburgh, 1937
by Henry Smith Leiper

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

by

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WILLETT, CLARK & COMPANY
CHICAGO NEW YORK
1938

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Norwood, Mass.-La Porte, Ind.

SEP -3 1938

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

FEW will question the significance of the issues which engaged the attention of the conference on Church, Community, and State held at Oxford in July, 1937. More important than the conference itself is the continuing process, in which the conference was not more than an incident, of an attempt on the part of the Christian churches collectively — without, up to the present, the official participation of the Church of Rome, but not without the unofficial help of some of its thinkers and scholars [1] — to understand the true nature of the vital conflict between the Christian faith and the secular and pagan tendencies of our time, and to see more clearly the responsibilities of the church in relation to the struggle. What is at stake is the future of Christianity. The Christian foundations of western civilization have in some places been swept away and are everywhere being undermined. The struggle today concerns those common assumptions regarding the meaning of life without which, in some form, no society can cohere. These vast issues are focussed in the relation of the church to the state and to the community, because the non-Christian forces of today are tending more and more to find embodiment in an all-powerful state, committed to a particular philosophy of life and seeking to organize the whole of life in accordance with a particular doctrine of the end of man's existence, and in an all-embracing community life

1 A volume of papers by Roman Catholic writers dealing with subjects closely akin to the Oxford Conference and stimulated in part by the preparatory work for Oxford will be published shortly under the title *Die Kirche Christi: ihre heilende, gestaltende und ordnende Kraft für den Menschen und seine Welt.*

which claims to be at once the source and the goal of all human activities: a state, that is to say, which aims at being also a church.

To aid in the understanding of these issues the attempt was made in preparation for the conference at Oxford to enlist as many as possible of the ablest minds in different countries in a common effort to think out some of the major questions connected with the theme of the conference. During the three years preceding the conference studies were undertaken wider in their range and more thorough in their methods than any previous effort of a similar kind on the part of the Christian churches. This was made possible by the fact that the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, under whose auspices the conference was held, possessed a department of research at Geneva with two full-time directors and was also able, in view of the conference, to establish an office in London with two full-time workers and to set up an effective agency for the work of research in America. There was thus provided the means of circulating in mimeographed form (in many instances in three languages) a large number of papers for comment, of carrying on an extensive and continuous correspondence, and of maintaining close personal touch with many leading thinkers and scholars in different countries.

Intensive study over a period of three years was devoted to nine main subjects. The results of this study are embodied in the six volumes to which this general introduction relates and in two others. The plan and contents of each, and most of the papers, were discussed in at least two or three small international conferences or groups. The contributions were circulated in first draft to a number of critics in different countries and comments were received often from as many as thirty or forty persons. Nearly all

the papers were revised, and in some instances entirely rewritten, in the light of these criticisms.

Both the range of the contributions and the fact that the papers have taken their present shape as the result of a wide international interchange of ideas give these books an ecumenical character which marks a new approach to the subjects with which they deal. They thus provide an opportunity such as has hardly existed before for the study in an ecumenical context of some of the grave and pressing problems which today concern the Christian church throughout the world.

The nine subjects to which preparatory study was devoted were the following:

1. The Christian Understanding of Man.
2. The Kingdom of God and History.
3. Christian Faith and the Common Life.
4. The Church and Its Function in Society.
5. Church and Community.
6. Church and State.
7. Church, Community and State in Relation to the Economic Order.
8. Church, Community and State in Relation to Education.
9. The Universal Church and the World of Nations.

The last six of these subjects were considered at the Oxford Conference, and the reports prepared by the sections into which the conference was divided will be found in the official report of the conference entitled *The Oxford Conference, Official Report.* (Willett, Clark & Company).

A volume on *The Church and its Function in Society,* by Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft and Dr. J. H. Oldham (Willett, Clark & Company), was published prior to the conference.

Three of the volumes in the present series of six have to

do with the first three subjects in the list already given. These are fundamental issues which underlie the study of all the other subjects. The titles of these volumes are:

The Christian Understanding of Man.
The Kingdom of God and History.
The Christian Faith and the Common Life.

The remaining three volumes in the series are a contribution to the study of three of the main subjects considered by the Oxford Conference. These are:

Church and Community.
Church, Community and State in Relation to Education.
The Universal Church and the World of Nations.

The subject of church and state is treated in a book by Mr. Nils Ehrenström, one of the directors of the research department. This has been written in the light of discussions in several international conferences and groups and of a wide survey of the relevant literature, and has been published under the title *Christian Faith and the Modern State* (Willett, Clark & Company).

The planning and shaping of the volume is to a large extent the work of the directors of the research department, Dr. Hans Schönfeld and Mr. Nils Ehrenström. The editorial work and the preparation of the volumes for the press owes everything to the continuous labor of Miss Olive Wyon, who has also undertaken or revised the numerous translations, and in the final stages to the Rev. Edward S. Shillito, who during the last weeks accepted the responsibility of seeing the books through the press. Valuable help and advice was also given throughout the undertaking by Professor H. P. Van Dusen and Professor John Bennett of America.

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COMMUNITY AND CHURCH: AN HISTORICAL SURVEY AND INTERPRETATION

by

K. S. LATOURETTE

COMMUNITY AND CHURCH: AN HISTORICAL SURVEY AND INTERPRETATION

The current relations between community and church can be understood only against the historical background out of which they have emerged. The present situation — or situations, for the scene is varied — has arisen out of particular sets of events. Moreover, the relationship has been profoundly altered in the past hundred and fifty years with results which are only now beginning to be fully apparent. Back of this change lie a number of causes. Several of these are obvious and have often been commented upon. Others, among them some of primary importance, appear to have been overlooked. It need scarcely be said that in a paper as brief as this must necessarily be, the moving panorama of the past can be painted only with the broadest possible strokes. Most of the details and qualifying incidents must be omitted.

(1) First of all, we must remind ourselves that since the dawn of recorded history every community has tended to have its own religion, to which all the members of that community have adhered as a matter of course. Each tribe has had its deities or patron saints by whom it is supposed to be aided and whom in turn it is supposed to serve. The Greek cities possessed their gods and the Greeks as a whole were bound together in part by a pantheon common to them all. In the Roman Empire an official religion was patronized by the imperial authorities. The Jews acknowledged Yahveh. For the Chinese empire Confucianism became the faith of the community and other religions

were tolerated only in so far as they did not interfere too greatly with the established system. Zoroastrianism became the religion of the Persians.

Frequently, to be sure, in a given community more than one religion has existed. Indeed, more than one may be given the formal patronage of the community. Thus in the old Japan Buddhism, Shinto and Confucianism existed side by side, each accorded community support. In the Roman Empire before Constantine, some gods were officially recognized and their cults maintained as matters of community concern, while many cults existed to which formal recognition was not granted but which were tolerated so long as their adherents did not become too serious a menace to the state and to the official cults. This medley of religions was in part a consequence of the imperfect fusion of previously existing communities into the new and larger community embraced by the Roman Empire. So Judaism went on as the religion of an ancient community within the confines of the larger community of the Greco-Roman world.

Often the faith of the community has been compelled to struggle to maintain itself against other religions entering from other communities. Of one of those series of struggles the Old Testament gives eloquent witness.

Sometimes the community has tolerated private skepticism as to the validity of its accepted religion if this skepticism is not expressed with too much indiscretion and if it does not interfere with the maintenance of the public ritual of the official cult. Thus in the Roman Empire doubt as to many of the beliefs of the community religion was widespread, but so long as the doubters were willing to participate in the customary religious forms they were molested little if at all.

Christianity began as a minority faith within the com-

munity of the Roman Empire. It immediately gave rise to what was in some respects a community of its own, the church. The church regarded itself as inheriting the divine favor once reserved for the Jews — as being "the Israel of God." By members of the general community about it Christians were regarded as traitors and were persecuted, first by the Jews and then by the general body of the population of the Mediterranean world. Because they declined to join in the religious observances of the community they were declared to be atheists and hence odious. Their abstinence from the community cult was pilloried as a cause of the misfortunes which overtook the Greco-Roman world in the third and fourth centuries. Vigorous and bloody attempts were made to force them to conform.

(2) In the second place, it is important to recall that until about a century and a half ago, Christianity, where it was the predominant religion, was accepted as a community affair. When in the time of Constantine persecutions ceased, it was because Christianity had been formally adopted by the Greco-Roman community. At first it was taken over as simply one of the community's religions and was carried on side by side with the older community cults. Later it was made the only religion of the community, and from it the Jews alone permanently dissented. When, beginning with the fifth century, the Roman Empire shrank to the remnant which was continued in the Byzantine empire, and what had been the Greco-Roman community disintegrated, the church of the Roman Empire broke up into regional bodies and the various resulting branches continued in close association with the successor communities. So one form of Monophysitism became the faith of the Coptic community. Another strain of Monophysitism became the religion of the Syrians on the Mediterranean littoral. The community which formed

the heart of the Byzantine empire and had Greek for its preponderating language, as its religion had what we now denominate the Greek Orthodox Church. In the West what we now term the Roman Catholic Church became the prevailing faith. Largely because of that church, moreover, western Europe was drawn together into what was in many respects a community.

Throughout the fifteen hundred years between the third and the nineteenth centuries Christianity was again and again adopted as the faith of a community. Indeed, conversion was by the community as a whole rather than by individuals. To be sure, mass baptism was practically always preceded by the baptism of a few scattered individuals or families. Eventually, however, the community as a whole adopted Christianity. Sometimes this step was taken because of the example set by the accepted leaders. In other instances, the leaders coerced the subject majority into following them to the baptismal font. Not infrequently a foreign conqueror by persuasion, by the inducement of privileges to Christians, or by actual force, brought a community into the fold of the church.

One of the first communities to adhere to the Christian faith *en masse* was that of Armenia. So much was conversion there a community affair that the king led the way and at least some of the priests of the former community cult became priests of the new faith. The rapid conversion of the Roman Empire which followed upon the adoption of Christianity by Constantine and his successors constitutes the major example in history of the transfer to Christianity of the religious loyalty of a community. In the conversion of the Franks and of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain, we have instances of the voluntary conformity of the community to the example of the natural leaders. In Norway we have an example of the use of force by the king to induce his

subjects to accept baptism. In the case of the Saxons, of some of the Wends in the present Germany, and of several of the peoples on the southern and eastern shores of the Baltic, we have the vigorous employment of force by a conqueror to compel an alien community to change its religion. In the extensive Spanish and Portuguese conquests of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the Americas and Asia are many examples of a conqueror inducing subject communities to adopt Christianity. Here armed force was usually not employed so boldly and ruthlessly to bring this about as it had been earlier among the Saxons or in the Baltic countries in the Middle Ages. However, pressure was brought in other ways.

(3) In the third place, acceptance of Christianity by the community did not preclude a certain amount of unbelief. In the Europe of medieval times, so often regarded as the age of faith, skepticism was widespread among both masses and leaders. Only infrequently was it carefully reasoned. That it existed and was extensive must be obvious to every student of the period. The contempt in which the clergy were so often held by the laity, the neglect of attendance upon religious services, the quips at the expense of religion which passed from lip to lip, and the callous simony and nepotism on the part of so many of the clergy, indicate a practical and extensive lack of confidence in the validity of the claims of the Christian religion. Yet widespread as were incredulity and indifference, in theory Christianity was the faith of all but the Jews, and against the latter chronic resentment broke out from time to time in violent spasms. Generally, too, the community abhorred heresy and sanctioned strenuous measures for its eradication. All but the recalcitrant Jews were baptized and subject to the church.

In the time of the Renaissance skepticism became more

obvious. Many of the clergy, even of the highest ranks, were infected with it. Yet even then Christianity remained officially the faith of the community and all conformed to some of its sacraments.

As late as the eighteenth century, when criticism of the church and of basic Christian convictions became popular in Europe, baptism and a formal connection with the church were still the custom. Even Voltaire was baptized and was buried in consecrated ground.

(4) In the fourth place, it is highly significant that always, even when Christianity has become the faith of the community, a tension has existed between the Christian conscience and the standards of the community. In the centuries before Constantine this expressed itself in denunciations of the current idolatry and of the gods and of many of the moral practices of the pagan majority. When, in the fourth century, thousands poured into the church and Christianity was adopted by the Greco-Roman world, the tension found outlet partly through monasticism. The monks rejected the compromises of Christian ethical standards in the community religion which passed for Christianity, and dwelt apart as anchorites or in groups where they could make the effort to attain to what they regarded as Christian ideals.

At first many of the official leaders of the church looked askance at the monks, but eventually monasticism was accepted as a valid expression of Christianity and as a normal phase of the life of a community which had Christianity for its faith.

However, the sense of contrast between the ideals found in the New Testament on the one hand and the practices of the nominally Christian community and of most of the clerical hierarchy on the other, could not be ignored. Throughout the Middle Ages fresh protests arose. Some

of these sought to draw more nearly into approximation with New Testament standards the lives of all Christians. The Cluniac movement endeavored to bring all the clergy to the chastity enjoined of monks and to purge the church of simony, nepotism and other departures from Christian ethics. Again and again protests were made against the luxury, avarice and pride of the clergy. In such efforts as the Peace of God and the Truce of God measures were undertaken to bring within bounds the private warfare and robbery which plagued the land. Many of these movements remained within the church of the community, usually as new monastic orders. The Cistercians, the Carthusians and the Franciscans are only a few among the many of this type. Others broke with the official church or were cast out by it. The Lollards, the Poor Men of Lyons, and the followers of John Huss come immediately to mind as outstanding examples of these " heretics."

In spite of skepticism on the one hand, and on the other of protests against the laxity of the majority who bore the name of Christian, all through the Middle Ages church and community remained practically co-extensive. Except for Moslem and Jewish minorities and a very few pagans in the north, by 1500 all the peoples of western Europe called themselves Christian. In the Near East were Christian minorities who were offering a stubborn resistance to the prevailing Islam. They were slowly losing members. Yet part of their strength lay in the fact that with them, too, church and community were so closely interrelated — that to be a member of the Greek, or the Armenian, or the Coptic community was to be a member of the church associated with that community.

(5) In the fifth place, in western Europe the Protestant Reformation did not diminish the intimacy of this re-

lation between church and community. To a very large extent, the secessions from the Roman Catholic Church were by communities. In Scandinavia, much of Germany, the northern portions of the Low Countries, England, and Scotland — to mention only part of the list — this was the case. Indeed, now that the tie with Rome was broken, community and church were even more closely bound together. Rome had made for a church which in many of its features transcended the various local communities of western Europe, and was the chief bond of a somewhat nebulous but still real community which might be termed Western Christendom. The Reformation, by shattering this unity through Rome, encouraged the processes by which the several regional churches took on the color of their respective communities. Particular types of Protestantism, moreover, molded particular communities. Thus modern Scotland owes many of its characteristics to Calvinism, and modern Scandinavia to Lutheranism.

The Protestant Reformation did not bring to an end the tension between the Christian conscience stirred by the New Testament and the sub-Christian practices of the nominally Christian communities. If anything, it accentuated it. The Trentine reforms were partially an answer to the Protestant challenge and partly the fruit of the efforts of those who, while remaining within the Roman Catholic Church, wished to make it approximate more closely to New Testament standards. Within that ancient body, moreover, new monastic orders arose from the dreams of those who wished to live the perfect Christian life. Here and there, too, a voice was raised, like that of Las Casas, against the denial of Christian ethics by the deeds of professing Christians. From within Protestantism movements emerged in protest against what were deemed the laxities and corruptions of the prevailing nom-

inal Christianity of the community. Some of these, like Pietism, remained within the official church. Others, like Puritanism, attempted to transform the official church, but ultimately were forced to break with it. Still others, like the Independents and the Quakers, from almost the first separated from the state church and became "sects."

However, until almost the close of the eighteenth century, church and community continued the tradition of close association: to be a member of a given community was automatically to be a member of a particular branch of the church. In this Christianity was repeating the experience of other religions.

(6) In the sixth place, commencing with the latter part of the eighteenth century, a development began which was new not only in the history of Christianity but also in the history of other religions — a divorce between church and community and the presence of large numbers of heretofore nominally Christian communities who had no formal connection either with the church or with any other recognized religion. This first appeared in the British colonies of North America — the later United States. In some of these colonies a connection with the church was almost universal. In others a large proportion of the population appear to have had no connection. Within two generations independence was followed by disestablishment of the church in such of the colonies as had had a formal association of church and state. By 1783 it is said that about nine-tenths of the population were without membership in the church. In Europe the French Revolution was accompanied by the disavowal by thousands of an affiliation with the church. In the course of the nineteenth century, in a number of countries the ties which had bound state with church were severed. Both state and church had traditionally been expressions of the

life of the community and both had embraced practically the entire community. The separation of church from state was frequently an indication that the church could no longer claim all the members of the community as its own. By the end of the nineteenth century, millions in what had once been known as Christendom were without any connection with the church. They had not even been baptized as infants.

For this termination of the time-honored bond between church and community two contradictory factors are responsible.

One of these is fairly obvious and has often been described. It is a widespread skepticism and indifference. As we have suggested, neither the skepticism nor the indifference is new. Both have been found ever since Christianity first became a community faith. What is novel is the open rejection of Christianity and the failure to establish even a nominal membership in the church. Religion represented by Christianity is believed to be intellectually untenable or irrelevant to the burning issues of contemporary life or incapable of providing men and women with what they most want. As a result, sometimes an open attack is made on Christianity, and the break with the church is conscious and bitter. At other times the church is simply ignored.

The second cause is the increased vitality of the church. Not always do we recognize the fact that Christianity was never quite so vigorous as it has been in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In no other century and a half has it given rise to so many new movements. In that time Roman Catholicism has given birth to more orders and congregations than in all the preceding course of its history — and a new order or congregation is evidence of deep conviction and fresh energy. Within Protestantism has

broken forth revival after revival and such new creations have appeared as the Sunday schools, the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian associations, the Young People's Society for Christian Endeavor, and the many student Christian organizations. Many new denominations have come into being — and as a rule a new denomination is evidence that to enough people Christianity has come as a sufficiently fresh and powerful experience to lead them to express their faith in an original fashion. Out of Christianity have emerged powerful efforts for social reform. The antislavery movement had Christian roots. So did much of the impulse toward ameliorating the treatment of prisoners, toward the improvement of the lot of the underprivileged, and toward the abolishment of war.

Moreover, the past century and a half have been the greatest missionary era in the history of the church. The huge migrations of European peoples to the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, have been followed and a large proportion of the immigrants held to their hereditary faith. Among non-Christian peoples Christianity has been propagated over a wider area than any religion or any other set of ideas has been spread by professional agents in the entire history of mankind. These professional missionaries have been supported by the voluntary gifts of more millions than have ever before contributed of their own free will to the spread of any faith. The missionaries have reduced to writing more tongues than had previously in all the experience of mankind been given a written form. They have been the schoolmasters of millions of non-Europeans. In one great land, China, almost singlehanded they laid the foundations of a modern medical profession. They have profoundly modified the cultures which are emerging from the impact of the Occident upon non-Occidental peoples.

They have been the instruments for bringing into existence growing Christian communities in most parts of what has usually been termed the non-Christian world.

This abounding vigor within Christianity, it may be well to note, has expressed itself in activity and in the spiritual and moral change of individuals and groups rather than in the creation of fresh theologies. Out of this life no new system of theology has yet emerged which for breadth of scope and commanding intellectual power equals that of Thomas Aquinas. Yet we need to remind ourselves that in most of the great revivals of Christianity theological creativity has followed and not preceded the new burst of life. The Franciscan and Dominican movements did not arise out of new theologies, but were one source of the stimulus which produced a whole series of great formulations of theology. Calvin's *Institutes* came after Luther and not before him. Back of the Pietist and Wesleyan movements lay no commanding new theological system. We must not, then, scorn this nineteenth and twentieth century awakening within the Christian churches or underestimate its significance because of its relative theological sterility.

This increased vitality in organized Christianity during the past century and a half has helped to sharpen the distinction between church and community and has served to strengthen the drift of a large proportion of the community away from the church. By and large the newly invigorated church strove to make its life accord more closely with the standards of the New Testament. This led to uneasiness over the compromises entailed in the traditional and prevailing forms of association between church and community. In an attempt to make the church more consistent with its Christian profession came the Oxford Movement and the Free Church of Scotland. In numbers of regions, as in the United States, the new life strengthened denomi-

nations outside of branches of the church which were established by law and contributed to disestablishment. In general in western Europe and in the new and growing communities of Europeans overseas the standards of church membership rose. Christians became more uneasy over the contradiction between the kind of life to which their faith called them and the ethics of the nominally Christian community. Membership in the church tended to be from individual volition and not to follow automatically upon birthright in a community.

The extent of this heightened requirement for participation in the church can easily be exaggerated. In many communities, especially in Europe, the old tradition persisted. In the United States, where the break with the past was marked, the proportion of the population having a formal church connection increased in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries until it became approximately half of the whole. Obviously to many of these millions church membership did not entail any drastic dissent from the mores of the community.

However, when all of these qualifications have been made, the fact remains that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the tendency was to make membership in the church more exacting in its demands upon conduct and in its understanding of Christian teachings. It is significant that on the geographic frontiers of the church, in what is usually termed the foreign mission field, the majority of both Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries insisted upon a longer period of probation, upon more instruction and upon higher standards of conduct for admission to the church than had been general since the earliest Christian centuries. Indeed, it may be that not even in the first three centuries had the requirements for admission from paganism been so high.

For strangely diverse reasons, then, the past century and

a half have seen the traditionally intimate association between the church and community weakened and the contrast between the two accentuated. For the first time in human history multitudes have been born, grown to manhood, and died without having even a formal connection with what is usually termed religion. In the twentieth century this tendency has been accelerated.

(7) Finally, it must be noted that the religious vacuum thus created has not remained unfilled. New enthusiasms have entered to take the place left vacant as Christianity has either voluntarily abdicated or been ushered out of its position as the faith of the community. Never for long has there ever been a community without some kind of community faith. Now that in many communities Christianity is ceasing to be that faith another has come in. That new faith is nationalism in one of its varied forms. In each land nationalism becomes attached to a particular set of ideas which it espouses with passionate devotion. The Holy Russia of today is more ardently nationalistic than ever, but is now the exponent not of the Orthodox Church, but of a Russian interpretation of the dogmas of Karl Marx. Italian nationalism has become the champion of fascism, and German nationalism of National Socialism. Only twenty years ago the United States entered the World War, ostensibly to " make the world safe for democracy," partly because President Wilson and millions of his fellow countrymen were persuaded that otherwise democracy of the American type could not continue to exist. By decisions of the Supreme Court allegiance to the United States has priority over allegiance to the Christian conscience. Nationalism is, of course, not confined to so-called Christendom. It has Japanese, Chinese, Indian, and Turkish forms. Nearly always it is associated with a particular set of dogmas. Everywhere except in Japan it tends

to fill the gap left by the weakening of previous faiths, and in Japan it is associated with an ancient national cult, Shinto, which was already to hand.

What does all this mean for the future? No one with a historical training ought confidently to predict. History is haunted by the ghosts of unfulfilled prophecies. However, it must be clear that it does not, as is so frequently assumed, necessarily mean the disappearance of Christianity. We need to recall that not only are we witnessing a widespread renunciation of Christianity, but also that the church has never been so vigorous and so widely influential in the affairs of men as in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To be sure, in the past two decades the church has been dealt some severe blows. It seems fairly clear that in the years just ahead the conflict between Christian ideals and the ideals and practices of at least some of the communities in which the church is set is to become more acute, with fresh persecutions for Christians. For this Christians must be prepared. He would be a rash prophet, however, who would forecast in this the collapse of the church or the passing of its faith.

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

by

ERNEST BARKER

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

1. COMMUNITY

We use a number of words in English — people, nation, society, and community — which all have different shades of meaning, but which are all so closely related that they possess, or at any rate seem to possess, a fundamental unity. We also use a word which is common to most European languages — the word state. It is a word related to the first set of words; but it is not so much related but that it may be distinguished. To state its differentia and to express its particular connotation may be the best way of arriving at an understanding of the first set of words.

(1) A state is a legal association, or, as some say, a juridical organization. Membership of the state is a legal fact, depending on some sort of legal act, such as registration or naturalization. The state itself is constituted by a legal act, or a series of successive legal acts, called a constitution; it is " constituted " in the sense that the mode of its activity is determined by such act or series of acts. That activity always assumes a legal form. It consists in the declaration and enforcement of general rules of law, within the terms and subject to the prescriptions of the constitution. The state exists by the grace of law, and for the purpose of law. We may almost say that it *is* law.[1]

1 " We may almost say that the state is law ": This suggestion was challenged by a group of Chinese thinkers, on the ground that law is abstract and impersonal, that Christianity has a higher ideal which is concrete and personal, and that it is the duty of the church constantly to remind the state and the law of this higher reference. But all that was intended by the writer was to suggest that the state necessarily acts by the *form* or

To say that the state is constituted — which means, in effect, created — by a legal act is not to say that it is created by the putting together of individuals hitherto separate, or, in other words, by an act of contract between such individuals. What actually happens is something at once more simple and more subtle. It is possible to conceive a legal association or juridical organization as being "constituted," not by the drawing together of parts which were hitherto separate into a whole which is utterly new, but by the turning of some whole which already existed, but existed in another form, into the new form of such an association or organization. What is new, in such a case, is not the whole itself, but the new form of the whole and the new mode of its activity. The whole which existed before still continues to exist, in its old form and with its old mode, or modes, of activity; but henceforth it assumes, or rather adds, a new form and a new mode of activity. This is a line of thought and a method of interpretation which we may properly apply to the state. It is a legal association, or juridical organization, which has been constituted from a previously existing whole. That whole is a people, nation, society or community. When it becomes a state, or comes to be regarded as a state, this whole does not cease to be what it was. It does not lose its previous form or its previous modes of activity. It simply adds a different form and a new and separate mode.

It is difficult to avoid the language of time, or to speak

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method of law — that is to say, by general rules which can be generally enforced. Nothing in this suggestion precludes a constant reference of the *content* of law to the Christian ideal. On the other hand, the necessity involved in the form of law — the necessity that the rule should be general and capable of general enforcement — *does* preclude the enactment of rules which cannot be made general and cannot be generally enforced. The peril of the Christian churches is that they may urge the state to do what it cannot do — to make a law which cannot be a general rule for all and cannot be generally enforced.

otherwise than in terms of an "old" or "previously existing" whole and a "new" or "added" form of that whole. There is this justification for such language that we sometimes find an existing group, which describes itself as a "people" or "nation," constituting itself as a state at a definite point of time. This is what happened, for example, in Czechoslovakia in 1920: "We, the Czechoslovak nation, desiring to consolidate the perfect unity of our people . . . to guarantee the peaceful development of our native Czechoslovak land . . . have adopted in our national assembly the following Constitution for the Czechoslovak Republic."[2] But the separation, or distinction, between people or nation and state is not really a matter of time. It is a matter of idea. There are constitutions, such as the English, which can hardly be dated in time. There are countries or areas where the conception of the people, nation, society or community and the conception of the state seem coeval. But the two conceptions nonetheless remain distinct. There is the conception of the state — the legal association, constituted by the constitution and acting in the mode of legal activity. There is the conception of the people, nation, society, or community, which we have still to examine. The two may be one, so far as concerns the body of persons which they embrace. In a perfect "national state" the state is the nation and the nation the state. But the two are two, and remain two, so far as concerns their form and their modes of activity. "By the state," says Bosanquet, "we mean society as a unit recognized as rightly [legally?] exercising control over its members through absolute physical power [an adequate power of enforcing legal sanctions?]."[3] That

[2] Preamble to the preliminary law and constitutional charter of February 29, 1920.

[3] B. Bosanquet, *Philosophical Theory of the State,* p. 185.

still leaves open the question what we mean by society, or community, as something other than such a unit.

(2) Before we seek to answer that question — but also in order to prepare the way for an answer — it is well to choose among the alternative terms which are presented to us by the ordinary use of language. We want a word which is related to the word "state," but not so closely related that it may lead to confusion between the conception of the state and the other conception which we are seeking to express and to define. The word "people," in our usage, has a definite political connotation, and is closely related to the conception of the state. It is connected with the idea of democracy: when we talk, for example, of "the will of the people," we are apt to think of the electorate; and the adjective "popular," which is totally different from the German "*völkisch,*" suggests the idea of democratic government. The word "nation" has in some ways a broader sense; but it also suffers from some defects. It too is closely connected, if in a different way, with the conception of the state; indeed when we speak of the League of Nations we are using the two words as if they were simply convertible, and when we speak of a "national" we are apt to mean a member of a state. The word "nation" is too much of an *étatiste* for our purposes; and it has besides the suggestion of a blood group, or body of kinsmen, which narrows its meaning and restricts its range. We are thus left with a choice between the words "society" and "community." Either will serve our purpose. Our English thinkers generally use the word "society." There is a danger in that word — not for ourselves, but for continental thinkers, who may read into the word suggestions which it does not carry for us. They may think that it suggests ideas of the *societas* of Roman law and the *société* of French law, and that it therefore conveys notions of a business partnership

or commercial company. No such idea or notion enters into our own usage; if there is any danger in the term, among ourselves, it is rather that it suggests, in common speech and ordinary parlance, the notion of "good society" or *le grand monde*. "Community" has no dangers: the only objection to it is that it escapes from any particular color so successfully that it is almost colorless. But it is coming into more general use and acquiring a more definite connotation. We speak, for example, of the dominions as "autonomous communities," freely united in a broader community (or "commonwealth") which is something more than a legal association, though it has some of the characteristics of such an association. We speak again of "community associations" — the voluntary bodies which have freely formed themselves for social and cultural purposes on our new municipal housing estates — and we speak of the "community centers" in which they freely meet and act. These usages indicate a sense of community as something which — whatever the area of its operation, large or small — is essentially free and essentially voluntary.

(3) It is important to notice at this point that our word "community" is a multi-colored sort of word. It has many areas of operation. The German word *Volk* is a unitary word. There is one *Volk,* though it may have two different manifestations according as we are thinking of the *Volk* already included in the boundaries of the German state or of the broader *Volk* which transcends those boundaries. Our word "community" is essentially multiform. There is first the community of the British Commonwealth. It is real; but it is not readily definable by any objective criteria of blood or speech or creed or culture. Then there is the community of Great Britain. It is real; indeed, it is even more profoundly apprehended than the

community of the Commonwealth, and its unity may be described by more definite marks or attributes. But it is not unitary or exclusive; and just as it co-exists with the broader community of the Commonwealth, so it also co-exists with the narrower communities, contained in itself, of England, Scotland and Wales. None of us can use the word community with the simple intensity with which the German uses the word *Volk*. When we think of community, we see successive circles, which are far from fitting neatly into one another with geometrical precision. When we think of the relations of church and community, we are thus thinking of something different from the relation of *Kirche* and *Volk*. We are thinking of the relations of a church, which itself (as we shall see later) takes a number of different forms, to a community which is also multiform. The problem, for us, is far from simple. Perhaps for that reason it is not an acute or dangerous problem. When *Kirche* confronts *Volk*, there may emerge either a plain dualism of the two, or a blunt demand for their "assimilation." When church confronts community, there is time to stop and think.

It is tempting to classify our different spheres or areas of community in different categories. We might, for example, regard the community of the British Commonwealth as a general "culture-circle": we might regard the community of Great Britain as largely, or even mainly, a political community — though also something more: we might regard the community of Scotland or that of Wales as a "national minority," which as such has claims or rights to equal treatment with the national majority and to an equal respect for its speech and customs. The use of such categories would not help us: on the contrary, it would confuse understanding by suggesting differences which do not exist. The community of the British Commonwealth is

a political community as well as a "culture-circle"; the communities of Scotland and Wales are more than "national minorities." There is a general notion of community which is common to its different circles or manifestations; and though this general notion may be qualified, or rather specified in some particular way, in each particular circle or manifestation, the general notion still persists.

(4) What is this general notion? It may be wise, before attempting to answer that question, to begin by saying what it is not. When we use the words community or society, there is no suggestion, such as tends to be conveyed by words like *Volk* or *nazione* or *nation,* of particular color and of consequent exclusion or partiality. In itself, and in its intrinsic connotation, the idea of community is not colored by any peculiar reference to race or soil or language.

It is true that any actual community, because it is composed of men, and therefore of physical human bodies, will tend to have common physical characteristics which may be roughly and crudely designated as racial. But the face of the earth is old; it has been swept over, again and again, by successions of different men, who have all left their traces and their blood; and if a community actually shows common physical characteristics, they will be the characteristics not of a race but of an amalgam of races. Moreover, common physical characteristics, however common they may be and however generally diffused, have no great bearing on the character and nature of a community unless they are accompanied by common mental and moral qualities; and there is no proof that common physical characteristics — in themselves, and apart from other causes — produce common mental and moral qualities. Nor can it even be admitted that every human community has common physical characteristics. The British Com-

monwealth is a community, and India is a community within that community, but both the one and the other are diversified by differences of physical characteristics, and the differences within the former grow as new physical types (for instance the Australian) develop themselves under the influence of a new climate and a new soil.

A common soil is no doubt necessary to any community; and the character of its common soil will no doubt affect, as indeed has just been suggested, the community which lives on the soil. But when we speak of a common soil, we may easily fall into errors and exaggerations. Different parts of the soil may well be very different; and in that case what is common in the common soil is not the soil itself, but our feeling about the soil. In any case there is no predestined harmony between soil and community. The soil is the environment of the community: that environment acts upon the community, and the community in turn reacts upon the environment: some *modus vivendi,* and some measure of harmony, is attained by the action and reaction; but this *modus vivendi* has to be attained, and can be attained, by *any* community in *any* environment.

Even a common language, though it is valuable, and indeed particularly valuable, is not an indispensable necessity of the life of a community. Not to speak of the Swiss community, there are communities in the British Commonwealth, such as the Dominion of Canada and the Union of South Africa, which are nonetheless communities though they are divided in language. Linguistic differences may possibly create additional difficulties; they certainly make additional demands on the spirit of mutual understanding and mutual comprehension; but far from making that spirit impossible, they may even encourage its exercise.

We must recognize that community has roots in the physical or quasi-physical — in some peculiar amalgam of "racial" ingredients; in a common soil, which may nonetheless be various and diversified; in a common mode of utterance, which may yet be consistent with varieties — but when we have recognized that fact, we have to disengage community itself from its physical or quasi-physical bases. These things, or some of them (they are not all always present), may be, in the language of Aristotle, "necessary preliminary conditions," but they are not "integral parts." Just as we have to distinguish community from the legal association of the state, which is erected upon it, so we have to distinguish it again from the natural basis of stock and soil and language, on which it is itself erected. The old idea of the social contract has gone out of fashion before the advance of historical and scientific studies. It was indeed an imperfect and confused idea. It supposed natural men to be furnished with the legal wisdom and the professional caution of solicitors, and made them con and perpend a contract of partnership "in the woods." It confused community or society with the state, and it made them both spring into existence together by a single act of immediate creation. But behind its confusions there lay a kernel of truth. Those who held the idea were aware of the fact that a community of men is somehow, and in some sense, a human creation, superimposed on the natural or physical grounds of human existence.

(5) A community involves *communication* or sharing. Sharing, in turn, involves two ideas — the idea of a something *in* which you share, and the idea of a number or body of persons *with* whom you share. Of these two ideas the more important and the more fundamental is the idea of the something in which you share. That is the prior idea, in the sense that it tends to determine the number of

persons who share. The number who can share with you in something must obviously depend in the main on the nature of that in which they are invited to share. But this is not the only factor. The area of a community, or the number of its members, will also depend on the physical possibilities of communication. It will depend, in other words, on the range of physical and mental communications — on the ease or difficulty of physical transport and actual personal intercourse; on the ease or difficulty of what may be called mental transport, which enables us to communicate with one another, without actual personal intercourse, through written or printed or photographed material presented to our eyes or broadcast matter presented to our ears. One of the difficulties of our times is that communities formed in one stage of physical and mental communications persist in a different stage. No doubt they will continue to persist. They have had a long existence in their own appropriate stage, and they have developed, in the course of that long existence, a general tradition and individuality. If the past did not exist and we were free to make our own community today, in the light of our present methods of communication, we might make a world community. If steamships and wireless communication had existed at the time of the War of American Independence, probably the North American colonies would never have seceded from their mother country. But they *did* secede: the past *does* exist; and it cannot be liquidated. Our actual communities are a legacy of the past, bequeathed to a different present, but inevitable in the present to which they have been bequeathed. We must accept the legacies of history. . . . But we need not deify them.

What is the something which has led men, in order that they might share in it, to live together in a community — a community with an area of membership determined

partly by the nature of the thing to be shared, and partly by the range of men's power of communicating with one another? To ask this question is not to inquire into the purpose or end of the state (that is another matter); it is only to inquire into the common substance — the shared and common treasure — of community or society. We can only say, if we make this inquiry, that there is no limit set to this common substance. Community, or society, does not mean a sharing with others in some one particular substance, some one particular good or commodity or benefit. Men may share in blood, and be a race, without being a community. They may share in language, and be a linguistic group, without being a community. They may even share in a common system of law and government, and be a state, without being a community. The old Austro-Hungarian empire was a state, but it was not a community. In order that there may be a community there must be conscious and purposive sharing (it is in this sense that a community of men is necessarily a human creation); and the sharing must be a sharing in the *general* business of life and in its *general* conduct.

(6) Two things are here predicated of community. The first is that it involves a conscious and purposive sharing. This is what Burke meant when he wrote that "society is indeed a contract," or, in other words, a partnership. However it may need, and however it may be connected with, "necessary preliminary conditions" of a natural or physical order — a natural sense of kinship, or a natural contiguity in space — it yet transcends these conditions, and is superimposed upon them by a purpose of further and higher communication. The second thing predicated is that community involves a sharing in a general way of life. This, again, is what Burke meant when he said that "it is not a partnership in things subservient only

to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature; it is a partnership in all science, a partnership in all art, a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection." [4] Whatever the mind of men can reach — in the way of common and mutual fulfilment of moral obligation; in the common practice of religion; in the common furtherance of science and art in their widest sense; in the common advancement of economic prosperity and the common upholding of economic standards — this is the affair of community, so long as this is done by voluntary and spontaneous effort, in the spirit of free partnership. Whoever can join in this, whatever his blood or speech, is a member of society and a partner in community.

In the great passage from Burke which has just been quoted community, or society, is still identified with the state. Burke begins by speaking of "society"; he glides, in the very next sentence, into speech of the "state," as if the two terms were synonymous.[5] A passage from a contemporary writer, Professor George Unwin, may illustrate the difference of the two terms, as we interpret them in England today:

I mean by the state that one of our social cohesions which has drawn to itself the exercise of final authority, and which can support that authority, if need be, by the exercise of physical force. And I mean by society all the rest of our social cohesions — family, trade union, church, and the rest. . . . Primitive man was restricted to a single social cohesion, which controlled him with supreme authority. Life was impossible outside his tribe. Freedom was impossible within it. The great array of differentiated social cohesions, which represent

[4] Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France,* IV, 105–6, of the edition in the World's Classics, Oxford.

[5] "*Society* is indeed a contract. Subordinate contracts for objects of mere occasional interest may be dissolved at pleasure — but the *State* ought not to be considered as nothing better than a partnership agreement" (*ibid.*).

in their totality the free society of modern civilization, and from which the authority and force embodied in the state have withdrawn themselves, furnish the individual with that great variety of choice which constitutes real freedom.[6]

The conception of community which is here implied has had a long history in our country. It may not have been explicit even in the days of Burke. But it had been implicit long before. If we go back to the Middle Ages, we find that our English law — the very law which seems the special and peculiar province of the state — was being built, in no small measure, by independent communities of lawyers, the Inns of Court, from which the judges were drawn, and which stood behind the judges. The Tudor age of the sixteenth century was in some ways a setback (as ages of "unification" are, whatever benefit they may bring): it was an age of one commonwealth, one state, one church, and everything unified. But the seventeenth century marks a new advance of free community action. The debt which we owe to our "Free churches," and to the general movement of nonconformity, from the seventeenth century onwards, is incalculable. They were the beginning of a new advance; but that advance also showed itself, and showed itself increasingly, in a number of other ways. The movement of English colonization was a movement of the community. "The expansion of England in the seventeenth century was an expansion of society and not of the state." [7] When England awoke to new life, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the new life ex-

[6] G. Unwin, *Studies in Economic History,* p. 459. In another passage (p. 28) he distinguishes between society as the set of forces from below — the forces of spontaneity, of germination — and the state as the set of forces from above — the forces of authority, of formulation. He adds that, in his view, "the main feature of British history has been the remolding of a state by a powerful society; the main feature of German history in the same period has been the remolding of a society by a powerful state."

[7] *Ibid.,* p. 341.

pressed itself in the form, not of political revolution, but of religious and philanthropic movements in the general community. When at last Parliament was reformed and the reformed Parliament began to stir itself, in the course of the nineteenth century, it did not seek to oust the action of the community in order to install the action of the state. Our nineteenth century method (and it is still our method in the twentieth) was that of cooperation between a democratic state and a free community. "It is a feature of the typical nineteenth century development," Mr. Sidney Webb wrote in 1910, "that voluntary association and government action have always gone on side by side, the one apparently always inspiring, facilitating, and procuring successive developments of the other." [8]

(7) We may now draw together some of the conclusions which are implied in the course of the argument.

(a) A community or society, taken as a whole, is a body of persons sharing with one another in the common substance of a general civilization, which is not limited to any particular activity. Viewed in regard to the substance in which it shares, a community is inclusive, total, we may even say totalitarian. But that word totalitarian may give us pause, and we must remember the qualifications to which its use is subject. In the first place it is the community and not the state which is total. The state is limited by its legal character and confined to the one common substance of declared and enforced law. In the second place, the community itself is not totalitarian in the sense that it acts as a *single whole* when it seeks to cover the whole of life. A community is itself a sum of interacting and complementary communities. It acts in and through the communities which it contains; and it is only total in so far as it contains sufficient riches of community organiza-

[8] *Cambridge Modern History*, XII, 747.

tion to correspond to the different aspects of human life and to enable men to share in all the different ways in which sharing is possible. A community without any church could not be a total community. A community in which family life was abrogated or truncated could not be a total community. A community in which there was no room and no place for trade unions would not be a total community.

(b) It follows that a community is federal in character. It is not a federation, since it is not a union of states; but we may understand its nature by the analogy of a federation. It is "a great array of differentiated social cohesions" — religious, economic, social, charitable, educational, artistic, and scientific — which unite and cooperate to form the total social cohesion. Not that the units which form a community ever club together, by any sort of federal act, to bring it into being. Such an idea would be absurd, though there are some forms of theory (of the "pluralist" or "functionalist" or "syndicalistic" order) which seem to look in that direction. On the contrary, the community is prior to its contained communities; and they develop or differentiate themselves within it as it seeks to attain a greater fullness. Yet there is also a sense in which we may say that the germination of new forms of social cohesion helps to form a community, or at any rate so broadens and enriches it that it becomes conscious of what it is and of the common substance in which it shares. It has often been pointed out, for example, that the conversion of Anglo-Saxon England to Christianity, and the formation of a Christian community in England, helped to create a general or national community.

There is no single formula in which we can comprehend the relation of the growing contained communities to the growth of the whole community, or the relation of the

general grown community to its various contained communities. Sometimes the contained communities may even seem not to be contained at all. A branch of the Roman Catholic Church contained within any given general community is also contained within that church at large; and it may be drawn so much to the one that it almost escapes the other. Yet it may perhaps be asserted that generally, and upon the whole, each community contains, or at any rate colors, all the different social cohesions in its area — whether they have germinated within it or have been introduced into it; whether they exist solely within it or ramify outside it. On the one hand they build it up, like a branching coral reef; on the other hand, it draws them together, without any violence and without any force, in the terms of a common life. There is a sense in which the English family, the English trade unions, and the English churches, all correspond, and all answer one another.

(c) The general community, with all its contained communities, employs no force. That is not to say that it does not exert influence, or even employ a discipline, upon its members. But at its utmost range it is pedagogic rather than legal; it is a school rather than a state. It is a free partnership of minds, for the exploration of all the fields of the mind; and it always retains the note of freedom, initiative, experimentation. We may alter the metaphor of the school, or rather we may carry it further; we may speak of the laboratory. This is a metaphor which has been employed even by an apostle of the state — Professor Bosanquet. He admits — indeed he contends — that

> the content of legislation and administration with a view to the public good — the inventive, experimental, creative element — is almost entirely supplied by one or other of the forms of social action which are not due to the initiative of the state. . . . True social work, independent of the public power, is

the laboratory of social invention. . . . The work of the state is *de facto,* for the most part, " endorsement " or " taking over " — setting its *imprimatur,* the seal of its force, on what more flexible activities or the mere progress of life have wrought out in long years of adventurous experiment or silent growth.[9]

The community is thus a laboratory for the state. But that is not all. The community is also a laboratory for itself. It may hand over some of its inventions to be " endorsed." But there is much that need not be endorsed, and cannot be endorsed. There are things we can discover for ourselves and do for ourselves in the field of community life which had better remain in that field, and indeed *must* remain in that field. The partnership in science and art, " all virtue and every perfection," must again and again run into the form of law; but it must equally, and even more, remain at point after point in its own fluid form — for otherwise science and art and virtue and perfection will be petrified in the form of compulsion.

There is also another sense in which the community, if it be regarded as a community of communities, is the home of freedom and experimentation and choice. The free community permits us all to make our choice among its riches. We can choose, enter, and relinquish the societies which it contains. No doubt they, too, like the whole community itself, exert an influence and even employ a discipline upon us, *so long as we are members.* But even so, as Professor Unwin has argued, " they are not a mere instrument of social pressure " on the individual. " He can react through them upon society, and this reaction of a strong and clear will upon society is freedom. But this is only possible on condition that he freely selects his social cohesions." [10] A community in which each man has this

[9] Bosanquet, *Philosophical Theory of the State,* Introduction to the second edition, pp. xxxii–xxxiii.

[10] G. Unwin, *op. cit.,* p. 459.

capacity of free selection — among parties, churches, professional and occupational societies, and all forms of voluntary grouping — is a laboratory not only for general social experiment, but also for the testing and trying out of individual character and personality.

(d) It follows that the community is in no sense a transcendent being which stands above the individual and determines his being and his duties in terms of its own higher nature. It is true enough that the long course of social experiment has resulted in a tradition of social experience; that this tradition of social experience elevates every individual, in a greater or less degree, according to his capacity for entering into its inheritance; that a great part of the content of every individual mind is a social content; and that membership of any community involves a long process of education in the tradition of the community. But we cannot leap from this simple truth to the very different assumption that there is some higher being in the music of which all individuals are merely so many stops — "an organism with ends, a being and means of action superior, in power and duration, to those of the individuals, separate or grouped, who compose it." [11] A common content of many minds does not involve a common mind — at any rate when we are thinking *sub specie humanitatis* and dealing with the sphere of our transitory human groups. (The conception of a church in which there is an indwelling Spirit of God belongs to a different plane of thought. But we only confuse thought, with sad and tragic results, when we take what belongs to one plane and transfer it to another and different plane. "I only am holy, saith the Lord.") A human community is its own members, and no more than its own members (though

[11] Article I of the Carta del Lavoro, approved and promulgated by the Fascist Grand Council of Italy, April 21, 1927.

it is more than its present members, since its past members, who are now gone, still live on in any element of its tradition which they have bequeathed, and its future members, who are still to come, already belong to it, in the sense that it owes a duty to them and to their well-being) ; it simply consists in the intercourse of those members, their relations to one another, their sharing *with* one another, and the common ideas and ideals which they have constructed and *in* which they share. This is its essence. And if it has some natural or physical basis — some " touch of nature " and consciousness of kin; some clinging to mother earth and some sense of the common soil — this is not of that essence, though it may be a primitive stuff which enabled the essence to emerge and grow. A community is something different from its own basis, and something above its necessary preliminary conditions. But it is also something less than a transcendent and superior being or mind, which stands above its members. It is just itself — a free partnership of individual minds, with its roots embedded in nature, but with its branches spread in the common air and the common light of the human spirit.

2. CHURCH

(1) In what has been already said the relation of church to community has already been, at any rate by implication, suggested or foreshadowed.[12] A church (or a number of

[12] The reader will have observed that the argument of the writer proceeds from a general conception of the development and nature of community, and then attempts to relate the idea and practice of the church to this conception. In an admirable and profound commentary on the paper, Dr. Hofer, of Leipzig, proposes an opposite procedure. Community, he suggests, in all its dimensions and manifestations belongs merely to history, to time, to the stream of " becoming." We must start from the church and from the nature and aim of the church; and on that basis we must adopt an attitude and express our demands in regard to the various concrete manifestations of community, which differ from country to country and

churches) is part of the federal nature of community. In many respects it is parallel with, and analogous to, other parts. Some of its objects may be similar to the objects of other parts, and they may even overlap with them; the educational objects of a church, for example, are similar to those of a specifically educational society, and they have some affinity even with those of a trade union which makes the advancement of education among its members one of its aims. In formal organization, again, a church may be closely analogous to other societies within the community;

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from age to age. These manifestations belong to the passing aeon of Adam: the church, entirely different in nature, belongs to the new aeon of fulfilment in Christ. The age in which we live is still the age of an intervening period (*die Zwischenzeit*), in which the two aeons meet and struggle with one another, and in which the church of the new aeon is confronted by the alien dimensions, manifestations and institutions of the old.

This line of thought may be called Augustinian, and it obviously diverges, with a wide divergence, from the tendency to Pelagianism which is sometimes said to be characteristic of English thought. The writer is very far from wishing to offer any rejoinder: he would only say that he has read Dr. Hofer's commentary with a deep and sympathetic attention. There is a difference between our two countries which demands earnest study on both sides. Dr. Hofer remarks, at the end of his commentary, that German history, both on its religious and on its secular side, has followed a totally different course from English. "Today," he writes, "England and Germany are not 'contemporary' and their positions are not analogous: the two countries and peoples are not in similar stages of history. This judgment is not a judgment of value, but simply a fact."

One further remark on Dr. Hofer's commentary may perhaps be made. He expresses his agreement with the writer's contention (at the end of the first and in the beginning of the second part of this paper) that a community of minds should not be hypostatized into a common mind transcending (or rather supposed to transcend) individual minds. But he adds that "it is a different question how far super-terrestrial spiritual forces may be at work in the world"; and he refers to St. Paul's mention of principalities, powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world (Eph. 6:12). Here again the writer is very far from wishing to offer any rejoinder. He only notes that the *Gemeingeist* reappears as something transcendental (if transcendentally evil), and that "this aeon" thus acquires satanic dimensions and manifestations.

it may adopt a similar type of internal government; it may stand in a similar relation to the government of the state, and may occupy a similar position in the eye of the law. In England, for example, the "Free churches" and the trade unions alike vest their property in trustees, under a trust deed which binds the trustees to use the property for the objects and in the ways which are specified in their rules. But it would be dangerous, and very erroneous, to press these analogies too far. A church, partly in virtue of the past history of its life, but above all in virtue of its own permanent and peculiar nature, stands in a special relation to the community. It has also stood, and in some countries still stands, in a peculiar relation to the state. These are two different matters; but they cannot be entirely disentangled or dissociated.

Before we look at the history of the relation of the church to the community, which has taken different forms at different times, there is one word to be said, of the first importance, in regard to the nature of the church. The Christian church is the custodian of a sacred Scripture, or revealed Word, which its members are bound to obey as the ultimate standard of authority in all matters which it covers, and which they are bound to proclaim, not only to the other members (if there be other members who are not Christians) of the community in which they are set, but also to members of other communities all over the world, so far as they are still ignorant of the Word. A Christian church is *sui generis* in its custody of the Word of God, and in the duty of mission — universal mission — incumbent upon it under the Word. One form of church may differ from another in its interpretation of the Word; but all forms are agreed in their basic idea of a custody of the Word and of a mission imposed by that custody.

But the Christian conception of a church goes farther

than this. God has not simply left a Word in custody with a church, which is thereby made unique, in virtue of the unique character of its common substance, among all other forms or varieties of community. He himself remains in the church, and his Spirit dwells perennially in its members. In the community of the church, there *is* a Being which transcends the members, and yet is immanent in them. Here we may speak of an organism, as St. Paul did; for here we have " the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Any organism has a life purpose which is served by every part and to which every part is instrumental. In the economy of God, and where he himself is present, there can be a divine and eternal life purpose which is served by every member of his church and to which every member is instrumental. Here, and here only, we can conceive of the soul of man as part of an organism, inspired and controlled by the life purpose of that organism, but free in the service of that purpose by virtue of its own free love. Apart from the presence of God, and in any system of human or secular economy, man can never be part of an organism, because the intrinsic and ultimate value of his personality — an end in itself, except before God — forbids him to be instrumental. St. Paul could conceive of man as growing in Christ — " in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God " — " up into him in all things." He could speak, again, of the Christian life as " hid with Christ in God." But he could also warn the believer against being beguiled by those who intrude into the things which they have not seen and are vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind, " not holding the Head, from which the body

by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." "Not holding the Head," we cannot see any Being which transcends the members of a community and yet is immanent in them; "not holding the Head," we cannot rightly speak of a community as an organism, in which each part is an instrument.[13]

(2) The Christian conception of a church as unique among other forms or varieties of community, first in being the custodian and in being charged with the proclamation of a revealed Word which is the ultimate standard of authority in all matters which it covers, and second — and even more — in being permeated and made organic by the continuing and indwelling presence of a personal God in whose service all its members live and have their being — this was a conception new to the ancient world in which it appeared. The Stoics had some conception of a cosmopolitan but indefinite society in which all rational men, possessing their "fragment" of reason, were knit to the

[13] The application to the church of the conception of "organism" has been criticized by some of the commentators on this paper. An Indian group put the question, "Is even the church better understood when it is called an 'organism' considering the admitted freedom of the parts?" Dr. Hofer, in his commentary, remarks that the conception of organism can only be applied to the church with caution and *cum grano salis:* "The Christian is first called as an individual, a personality, and then incorporated in Christ, and it is only to that extent and thereby that he is incorporated in the body of Christ, the church." The writer would at once admit, and even contend, that the metaphor of organism is still a metaphor, even when it is applied to the church, and that there is at most similarity — similarity over a wide area, but not a total identity — between the conception of organism and the conception of the church. His main argument is that if the word "organism" is used at all in reference to any group composed of human beings, it can best be applied to the church, because the church has a head as well as members, and because it has a single life purpose which every member must serve. But comparisons of a spiritual society to a physical system must always remain, at the best, approximations to truth.

impersonal reason of God (physically conceived as a sort of fiery ether); but that was a very different thing. An impersonal God, who was fundamentally a fine and tenuous physical substance, could only constitute an equally impersonal society, united (if indeed it could be called united) by a common physical sharing in the common physical substance of a mere fiery ether. What confronted the Christian church and challenged the Christian church was not the wraith of the Stoic cosmopolis, but the gigantic and visible fact of a universal empire united by the cement of a common worship of the emperor. This empire made no distinction, and allowed no distinction, between community and state — between the free partnership sharing in a common substance of civilization, and the legal association sharing in a common body of law intended to protect that substance. State and community were one in the Roman Empire, as they had been one in the Greek city-state. Everything hung on the one integrated body: religion was merely one of its departments: the conduct of worship was a legal duty of legal officials, and worship itself was a civic obligation.[14] When the Christian conception and practice of the church emerged, a profound question — perhaps the profoundest in history — thus arose. What was to be the relation of this conception and practice of the church to the community-state or state-community — the integrated body which was both these things in one?

It was not a possible answer to this question that the idea of community should be disengaged from that of the state, and that the church should take its place in community as a part of its federal system and a vanguard and a leader in the play of its federal life. That might eventu-

[14] This is not to say that private worship, and private societies for its conduct, might not be added — subject to the state's consent — to the basic obligation of public worship.

ally be what the church would do, and that might be its inward and ultimate trend; but many centuries were to elapse before that trend could become evident and before the church could attempt to take that place and act that part. In the conditions of the fourth century, when the church made its peace with the old system, it could not become a part of community; there was no real community there of which it could become a part. Neither could it constitute itself as another world — a whole other world — over against the existing world of the community-state. That would have been an impossible dualism. What could be done and what was done, was that the church should, *formally,* permeate and Christianize the existing world of the community-state and make it a single integrated community-state-and-church. In other words, the universal empire could, and did, become also, and at the same time, a universal or catholic church. One body of men had henceforth two aspects: in one aspect it was a community-state, and in the other it was a church. Or we may say, more exactly, that the community-state, becoming a community-state-and-church, had henceforth two governments — a secular government in things temporal, and an ecclesiastical government in things spiritual. This was the way in which the matter was put by Gelasius I about 500 A.D., when he enunciated the theory of a dyarchy of two authorities, and of the parity of the two.

(3) Identified with the community-state, the church, in its outward form, ceased to be a pure body bearing the custody of the Word and knit organically to its Head; it became the *alter ego* of another body, subject to the fortunes and the historic vicissitudes of that other body. As the community-state altered, contracted, split and showed fissures (by a sort of process analogous, in its way, to geological change), the outward form of the church was cor-

respondingly affected. Not that its own inner life, or the Word by which it was inspired, or the movement of its guiding Spirit, were ever for a moment inactive or ever without effect in determining its outward form and order. The church was never merely passive; but it is nonetheless true that, once identified with the community-state and made coterminous with it, it was necessarily affected by the changes and contingencies of the life of that body.

First the community-state bifurcated: it developed an Eastern or Byzantine manifestation as well as a Western or Roman; and there arose an Eastern or Orthodox Church as well as a Western or Catholic. Then, many centuries later, in the era of the Reformation, there came another historical fissure, and Protestantism emerged. This was partly produced by the working of the Word and the Spirit (we should be blind if we did not see that working) ; but it was also produced, in part, by a change of the community-state, and there is thus a sense in which we may say that once more the church, in its outward form, " bent with the remover to remove." The general designation of Protestantism cannot conceal the fact of a plurality of Protestant churches; and when we study this plurality, we have to remember not only the different doctrines (or different interpretations of the Word) on which it was based, but also the emergence of a new and plural conception and practice of the community-state.

The two things are tangled and intertwined; but following the thread of our argument we may concentrate our attention on the way in which the outward form of the church was affected by the change of the community-state in western and northern Europe. Here there had emerged what we cannot yet generally call by the name of the " nation " (though in some places it might be such) , but what we may safely call by the more indeterminate name of the

" region." Each region — whether it was a kingdom, or, as in Germany and Switzerland, a principality or a canton — was already acting as an autonomous community-state. If a region seceded from Rome, and adopted the principle of a Reformed church, it assumed that this church, in its outward form, must be identified and coterminous with itself. The old idea of the community-state-and-church persisted; it only assumed a new and more particular form. Hooker states this new form when he writes that " in a . . . Christian state or kingdom . . . one and the self-same people are the church and the commonwealth." In other words, three things are the same: a " people," or community, is also a commonwealth or state, and it is also a church. What was held by the Anglican Hooker was held also by Lutherans and Calvinists. It was the common — we might almost say the inevitable — belief of the sixteenth century. And it was inevitable because it was nothing new, but simply the accepted inheritance of the past, applied — and logically applied — to the new conditions of the present.

(4) How was this identification of community, state and church to be ended? How was community to be separated from state, and how was the church to find its place and its peace in the free partnership of community? The seed of the answer had always been present in the church, and it was to germinate from the church. The church, as a society of the Word and a community in the Spirit, had always been in its essence distinct from the community-state with which, in its outward form, it had so long been identified. If it began to thrust upwards again, in its own nature, it would not only distinguish itself from the community-state; it would also help to distinguish the community from the state; it would form a nucleus of free community which would encourage the general growth of such

community. Men have often distinguished between the church invisible and the church visible, or the church universal and the particular church. Perhaps more important is the distinction between the church as a society of the Word and a community in the Spirit, and the church as coterminous and identified, in its outward form, with the range of the community-state. After the sixteenth century that distinction (never forgotten, but never developed) began to assume new life, with consequential effects on the community-state itself.

On the one hand the reformed Catholic Church of the counter-Reformation began to stand out distinct, not only from the new Protestant churches, but also from the community-state. In the new order, or the new disorder, there was no community-state broad enough to be coterminous with its range. In the theory of Suarez the church, as a *communitas politica vel mystica* of divine foundation, is distinguished from the communities of human invention, however " perfect " (in the sense of having full capacity of political government) these may be; and it is interesting also to notice that his category of " perfect communities of human invention " includes not only the state, but also local communities, and even personal groups.

On the other hand the Protestant area of Europe began also to develop, in the course of the seventeenth century (though the movement was already beginning in the sixteenth), the idea of the separate *communitas* of the church. The regional — or, as it may perhaps better be called, the " territorial " — principle began to be challenged by what has been called the " collegial." The " collegial " principle appeared among the Calvinists; it may already be traced in the sixteenth century; [15] but it is defi-

[15] See the *University of Toronto Quarterly,* Vol. I, No. 1 (Oct. 1931), article on " The Problem of Spiritual Authority in England," especially pp. 33–37.

nitely enunciated by the Dutch Calvinist, Voetius, in the seventeenth, when he argues that the church is based on its own contract of society, independent of the political, and is therefore a " collegial " or corporate body with its own free membership and its own power over its own body. This is a doctrine like, and yet unlike, that of Andrew Melville, when he proclaimed to James VI of Scotland, in 1596, his theory of the two kings and the two kingdoms in Scotland. Melville was anxious to vindicate the claims of the custodians and governors of the spiritual kingdom against those of the earthly king; but he still held that the two kingdoms were coterminous — or, in other words, that every subject of the Scottish king should also belong to the Presbyterian Church. Voetius goes further, and his collegial church is of a different pattern from Melville's spiritual kingdom. But it is not so much in Calvinism (even of the type of Voetius) as in the English Independents of the seventeenth century, and in English nonconformity generally, that the doctrine of the collegial church sinks deep and becomes the one foundation. The Free churches were firmly grounded as societies of the Word and communities in the Spirit, distinct from the community-state. So grounded, they not only rooted themselves, apart from and outside the " integral " community-state: they also served as the nucleus of a further growth of free community; and they thus helped, as we have already had reason to notice, to disengage state and community and to foster the general growth of community (with themselves as part of it) in English thought and practice.

We must not overemphasize the part played by the Christian churches during the course of modern history in disengaging state and community. Other forces have also been at work; there has been, for example, the economic, from the voluntary companies which colonized in

the seventeenth century to the trade unions of the nineteenth. Nor must we exaggerate the extent to which community has been actually disengaged from state. The French Revolution was a triumph, or a return, of the integrated community-state, anxious to absorb the church and to make itself the one and only common ordering of human life. Today, again, in some European countries, the same triumph is being celebrated, with an even greater zeal. Under such conditions there may arise curious Erastianisms — or even, if we may use the word, Diocletianisms. Nonetheless, we may say today — speaking of ourselves in England, and speaking of the matter as we see it with our own eyes — that the community is something which may be distinguished from the state; that the churches have helped to make it distinct; that the churches belong to the essence of community; but that they belong to it in a particular way, which depends on their own particular character.

(5) A church, as we have said, is a part of the federal nature of community.[16] But, as we have also said, it is a

[16] A number of questions were raised by an Indian group in regard to the content of the argument of this section. The argument deals with the relation of church to community in the various forms, or areas, of community within the British Commonwealth. One question raised was whether some consideration should not have been given to the conception of the church universal, and its relation both to the conception of a universal community and to that of the particular or local community. Such consideration might well have been given; but the immediate problem to which the writer was directing his attention was that of the relation of particular churches (and mainly the Protestant churches) to the particular or local communities with which they are necessarily connected. . . . Other questions which were raised dealt with the special problems of India. What was to be the relation of the Indian church, as such, to the Indian Christian community as organized in an electorate for the purposes of parliamentary representation? Should there be a political party based on the church, or should members of the church take their place in other parties and seek to leaven those parties? The writer can only say that the argument of his paper would incline to the second alternative. Again the

part which is *sui generis:* it is a custodian of the Word, according to its own interpretation; and it has a mission imposed by the Word of which it is a custodian. This conception of mission will carry a church, in foreign missionary enterprise, outside the limits of the community in which it is set. But the cardinal question, when we are considering the relations of church and community, is the question of the mission of the church to its own immediate community.

Let us suppose that community to be (as it generally is) a nation — a single nation — a nation which lives and builds a general national tradition behind and beyond the legal association of the state, though if the state be a national state (as again it generally is) there will be sympathy and cooperation between the nation as such and the legal association as such. Upon this basis a church, with its mission to the nation and with its duty of testimony to the nation, may be impelled to draw its adherents from the whole of the nation, and to draw the whole of the nation into itself. It is in this sense that the Presbyterian Church of Scotland seeks to be a "national church, representative of the Christian faith of the Scottish people," with "a call and duty to bring the ordinances of religion to the people in every parish of Scotland." The church thus widens itself to the width of the whole community; and in one sense it is the community. In another sense it is just a part, or an aspect, or a function of the community — an aspect accompanied by other aspects, a part cooperating with other parts (economic, for instance, or educa-

question was raised whether the Indian church could make its peace with other societies, and cooperate with them as parts (similar to itself) in the general federal system of society, or whether it must break (and ask its members to break) with other societies. That is too grave a question for the writer to answer, though he would naturally wish, if it were possible, to see the first alternative followed.

tional) which, though less extensive in their range of membership or the scope of their general endeavor, still have their own place and their own function in constituting the general community.[17]

That is one possibility. Still confining ourselves to the relation of church and community, and still leaving the state out of account, we can also see other possibilities. The different Free churches in England help to constitute the English community, but none of them seeks to embrace the whole of it: each of them recruits its own circle of members; all of them acknowledge and respect one another's boundaries; and each and all can cooperate, through a federal council of the Free churches, to defend and maintain, before the community and for the benefit of the community, the common principles on which, in spite of their differences, they are all alike based. By their side stands the Church of England. Its relation to the English community is far from simple. In one sense it seeks, like the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, to be a national church, embracing the whole community and bringing the ordinances of religion to the people of England in every parish. In another sense, less formal and more real, it is content, like the Free churches in England, to recruit its own particular circle of adherents; and like them it helps to constitute the English community without claiming (otherwise than in form) to cover the whole of it. In still a third sense — when we take the state into account as well as the community — the Church of England has a peculiar relation to the state. It is " established " by it —

[17] It should be added that the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, broad as it is, does not of course include the whole of the Scottish people. Besides the Roman Catholic Church there are also, in the general field of Protestantism, (1) independent Presbyterian bodies; (2) Free churches of the English type; and (3) an Episcopal Church allied to, but independent of, the Church of England.

that is to say, it is given certain legal rights and subjected to certain legal duties which may be regarded as the corollary of its rights. Here we must notice a peculiar and perplexing fact, which can only be explained by the accidents of historical development. The Church of England, which, as such, and as its name indicates, exists in and for the English community, is established by a state (and so far as establishment involves control, it is controlled by a state) which is not the state of the English community, but a state including Scotland and Wales, and also northern Ireland, as well as England.

The relation of church and community in England is peculiar and peculiarly complicated. It is simpler in Wales. Here there exist Free churches, as in England; and here, since March 31, 1920, there exists what is called "the Church in Wales" — a body which is, in a sense, a branch of the Church of England, but a body which, having been "disestablished" since 1920, is separate from the established Church of England and governs itself autonomously. The general result is that the community of Wales, in its relations to the Christian churches, offers a simple pattern. Different churches, on the same footing, help to constitute the community. None of them seeks to embrace or include the whole, in reality or in form; each of them brings its contribution to the whole.

In the course of the analysis of community, in the first part of this paper, something was said about the multiform and multicolored nature of the British conception and practice of community, and about the many concentric areas of operation in which that conception was active. Not only do we regard each community as in itself a federation of groups (religious, educational, economic, and the like); we are also prepared to see successive circles of community — from the circle in which Scotland, England

and Wales are communities to the circle in which the United Kingdom is a community, and from that circle again to the circle in which the whole of the British Commonwealth is a community. When we consider this succession of circles we see that it is an artificial simplification of the relation of church and community, so far as we are concerned, to discuss that relation only in regard to the circle in which Scotland, England and Wales are communities.

We have also to think of the relation of the Christian churches to the community of the United Kingdom. Since that community is organized as a state (while the Scottish, English, and Welsh communities are not), it is in this area that the problem of the relation of church and state arises; and it is in this area that, as has just been noticed, the peculiarity exists of a church being established by the state in only one part of its territory. But the community of the United Kingdom still remains a community, even if it is organized as a state and even if we think of it largely as a state. Many of the churches, like most of our trade unions, are constituted on the general basis of the community of the United Kingdom, and help to constitute that community. The Free churches of England, though they may have originated in England and though they may be particularly represented in England, have flowed over the United Kingdom. The Church of England may be peculiar to England, but it is also closely associated with the Church in Wales and with the Episcopal Church in Scotland.

Nor is the United Kingdom the full limit of the range either of the Free churches or of the Church of England. We have also to think of the wider circle of the community of the Commonwealth. The one connection in which we habitually use the dubious prefix " pan " is when we speak

of the Pan-Anglican Synod which gathers together representatives from all the Episcopalian churches in the whole of the Commonwealth.[18] The Free churches are similarly spread. The connection which unites all the Episcopalian churches of the Commonwealth, or all the different branches of the various Free churches which are spread over it, may be loose. But there *is* a connection; and it is a part of the connection and the general constitution of the community of the Commonwealth. It would be hard to say that the community of the Commonwealth is organized as a state — at any rate as a state of any ordinary type. It would be equally hard, when we remember that it has a common king and a system of common cooperation between its various governments, to say that it is *not* a state. What is not hard is to say that it is community, and that the churches which ramify through it and by their common life are part of its common life help to constitute this community.

(6) The theme of the relation between church and state belongs to another inquiry. That inquiry turns on the point whether a community which is legally organized as a state should give, and whether a church should receive, a special legal status involving special legal rights and their correlative special legal duties (whether by way of " establishment " or by way of " concordat ") : it also turns on the point whether, apart from such giving of special legal status to a particular church, the state has a general legal control over all churches and, if so, to what extent and within what limits.[19] The present inquiry, which is

18 Since 1866 all the bishops of the Anglican communion have been invited, at intervals of ten years, to a conference held in London at Lambeth Palace, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The conference includes bishops not only from Great Britain, the dominions, and the colonies (e.g., in Africa), but also from the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

19 There is also a further point on which the inquiry turns — whether,

simply concerned with the relation between church and community, has already dealt with the various *forms* which the church may take within a community as one of its parts or aspects: it remains, in conclusion, to say some word about its *function*.

In its essentials the function of any church, in the community in which it is set and which it helps to constitute, is the simple function of mission — the proclamation of the Word of which it is custodian, under the guidance of the Spirit by which it is made one body. Unique among all other forms or parts of community in the treasure of which it has custody, it has to diffuse that treasure, to the best of its power, among the whole community. No church lives to itself alone; each has to give its message and its service to the entire community, so far as lies in its power; and each, in order to give, must take something from the community — something of its color, something of its general stock of ideas, something of its general temper and habit of life. Not that the community has any right, or even claim, to assimilate the churches which it contains to its own image. They are, in their essence, societies of a universal Word and communities in a universal Spirit; and they shape themselves according to their essence — each according to its particular interpretation of the Word, and each according to its particular apprehension of the Spirit. But while they shape themselves according to their essence, they will also color themselves freely and voluntarily — it may even be by an instinctive

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and if so, to what extent, the churches have a right, or rather, as some would prefer to say, a duty, of giving testimony and offering advice on the policies of the state, e.g., of social reform within or international action without. Today, in the democratic state, where any group may press its program on the state, this is one of the gravest questions before the churches. But it is a question which also arises, and is graver still for the churches, in other forms of state.

and unconscious spontaneity — with the color and general character of the community in which they are set. This is a simple necessity if their message is to be understood by the people to which it is given. If a church had no community color, but were a simple neutral gray — still more if it took the color of some other community — it would lose its appeal, forfeit its sympathy, and become a foreign body embedded in the community rather than a part of its life.

But it is one thing to say that a church will assimilate itself to the general life of the community, in order to serve it better and with a better understanding. It is another thing, and a very different thing, to say that a community may, or can, assimilate a church perforce to itself. The community as a community has neither the right nor the power to attempt such assimilation. All it can do as a community is to diffuse the general influence of its whole tradition among churches, as it does among all the other parts of itself; and this it will do in any case, apart from any question of right or power, by the mere fact of being itself. Where right is claimed or power asserted, it is not the community as such which is acting. It is the community organized as a state; more simply, it is the state. Only the state can claim right or assert power.

In the discharge of its mission to the community a church will act in many ways. It will not only preach the Word, within its walls and without: it will also seek to provide education and general guidance (in clubs and camps and otherwise) for the young: it will seek to provide social activities, and methods of using and enjoying leisure, for adults. Whatever can bring to it new adherents, or comfort and sustain existing members, will lie within its scope and be part of its duty of mission to the community. But here a problem arises which has be-

come acute in our days, and which vitally concerns the general relation of churches and the community. A church, exalting its mission and widening its scope, may tend to become, at any rate in respect of its own members, a totalitarian body. It may seek to engulf the whole of their life in itself — providing them with societies, organized and directed by itself, for their every activity, and founding, for example, special trade unions for them which will keep them within its fold, or special political parties which will tend to the same effect. It is a danger of such a policy that it may tend to provoke a violent reaction. The state, claiming to represent the general community, may be led to exalt *its* mission and to widen *its* scope; going beyond its legal province, and assuming the function of general director and educator, it may claim for itself the whole guidance of youth and the whole provision of social activities to fill the leisure of adults. But there is a graver objection to the totalitarian church than the danger that it may tend to provoke, by way of reaction, the totalitarian state. A church which assumes such a form is defeating the general nature of community — and defeating also itself.

If, as has been argued, the community is by its nature federal — " a community of communities " — it is a part of the duty of churches to act within the federal system. They must recognize that they co-exist with other societies — trade unions, parties, and other groups — and that they have to live and to make their peace with these other societies. If each church became a total society, and if the community became a community of total societies, it would be an irreparably divided community. Nor would the community only suffer. The individual would also suffer. It is part of his freedom that he should belong to more than one society within the community; it is part of his general education and his general moral develop-

ment that he should learn to conciliate different loyalties, and to bring different duties, when they conflict, into harmony.

But above all — and this, from the point of view with which we are here concerned, is the final consideration — the church itself must suffer if it seeks to be total and if it fails to take its place and assume its station as one in the "great array of differentiated social cohesions." If the church has a mission to the whole community, its members must take their place in groups other than the church and carry the mission of the Word into these groups. If the whole church has a mission, the best way of its discharge is that each churchman should mix with the general community and with the different groups of the community — not living the life withdrawn, but the life of varied fellowship. The church which seeks to be total is barred by its very zeal from its own essential duty — the duty of "total mission" in the other and truer sense of a mission to the *whole community.* It is a noble temptation of a church to seek to include its members for every purpose, and to seek to deliver to them "the message of the church" on every issue, with the authentic voice of total direction. But if it is noble it is also a temptation. That church best discharges its mission which has many missionaries, all true to itself, but all, in their truth to it, true also to other societies, and true to the general community. The uniqueness of the church, as a society among the other societies of the community, is not the uniqueness of a self-contained and total society which peculiarly absorbs its members. It is the uniqueness of a society operating as a leader, *through its individual members,* in the service of other societies and of the whole community — a society which fulfills, *through them,* in those other societies, and in the whole community, the mission imposed upon it by its custody of the Word and the motion of the Spirit.

THE CHURCH AND THE NATION

by

MARC BOEGNER

THE CHURCH AND THE NATION

THE fact that I use the word " nation " in the title of this paper requires me to define the sense in which I use this word. Why do I not use the French equivalent of the English word " community," or of the German word *Volk?*

" Community " means society. The French language, it is true, gives to the word *communauté* the sense of the " body of citizens as a whole." But the French prefer to employ this word to describe a juridical regime applied to a society of persons living together and obedient to a common rule, like a religious community. As for the word *société,* which may be applied to any body of human beings with the same origin, the same customs and the same laws, it is most frequently used as a term in commerce or in jurisprudence or to describe a limited social area. When it is used without any other qualifying word it is certainly not the equivalent of " community."

I might say the same of the word *peuple,* which is the literal translation of the German word *Volk.* The *Dictionnaire Littré,* which is authoritative in France, gives to the word *peuple* these two main definitions: (1) a number of persons of the same country living under the same laws; (2) a number of persons who, although they do not inhabit the same country, have the same religion or the same origin (we might also add, the same language). In French the sovereignty of the people (*peuple*) brings out the fact that in a democracy the power is exercised by the majority of the citizens, by means of their representatives. Further, sentences and decrees are always passed

" in the name of the French people." But in current usage the word *peuple* usually signifies the masses of the population, both the peasantry and the working people in the towns, as distinguished from the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy.

What does the word *nation* mean in French? It is " an association of persons inhabiting the same territory, possibly but not necessarily, ruled by the same government, having had for a long time a sufficient number of common interests to cause them to be regarded as belonging to the same race." [1] Thus, however great may be the part played by community of soil, race, language or religion in the formation of a nation, it seems nevertheless as though little by little these elements cease to preponderate, and that a common culture, a common tradition, common interests, the sense of having a common destiny to fulfill, a mission to accomplish, exert an increasing influence upon the development of the nation. The idea of a common origin, connected more particularly with the term *peuple,* is gradually replaced, in the word *nation,* by the feeling that one has certain foods in common — material, intellectual and spiritual — which must be preserved and developed.

From this point of view nation and fatherland (*patrie*) are almost synonymous. For if the fatherland is defined as " the country in which one is born," it is equally " the nation of which one forms part." Nevertheless, if the word " fatherland " evokes, primarily, the image of the country of one's birth, limited by its frontiers, whether natural or due to conquest, the land of our fathers, the word " nation," on the other hand, suggests the life of the human beings who inhabit this particular section of the earth's surface in its entirety — the life of the community as a whole — including all their activities and interests,

[1] *Dictionnaire Littré.*

spiritual or intellectual, economic or social, regional or local, since all these persons know that they have a common history behind them, which binds them together; they are fully conscious of their firm desire to maintain this unity at the present time, and to transmit it to their descendants.

Is it necessary to suggest that the nation must not be confused with the state? It is, of course, correct to say that the state is the extent of the country which is under the control of one political authority, but the state is essentially the sum of the powers of law and of institutions, by means of which, on the one hand, it is governed or governs itself, and, on the other hand, affirms its sovereignty in view of other states and organizes its administration. It is possible to be a nation without being a state: the Czech nation was a tangible reality before there was any Czechoslovak state. Besides, a state, both internally and externally, may be an organism which governs several nations — as, for instance, the Roman Empire before the invasions of the barbarians, or the empire of Austria-Hungary before the Great War.

What is the origin of the nation? Is it possible to study it in its concrete reality, its genesis and its development? What do we learn in this respect from the formation of the French nation? Let us listen to the words of one of those who have studied its development with the greatest scientific accuracy, M. Jean Brunhes, professor at the Collège de France: [2]

All scholars whose minds are not ruled by absurd and dangerous political prejudices recognize that the part ascribed to race in history has been either exaggerated or distorted. No civilized race is pure; none of the political groups of the pres-

2 *Histoire de la nation française,* Vol. I, chap. 3 (Plon-Nourrit, Paris, 1920).

ent day correspond to a homogeneous race. *Race* does not exist, but the *nation* does; and it is the nation which has given to peoples of a different anthropological origin and a different linguistic family, and of different religious traditions, a cohesion, nay, even, in certain instances, an extraordinary unity.

It may be possible to claim that France alone, at the present time, has achieved a stronger and a more closely knit political unity than other countries; a unity of soul animated by the supreme desire for the good of the fatherland (*patrie*); yet possibly no other country in Europe has such a mixed population which blends into one elements drawn from nearly all the various races, which — one after another — have come into contact with this western part of the civilized world, either by peaceful infiltration or by invasion, and have affected the course of the nation's development.

The unity of France has issued from all this diversity. Without going back to the Stone Age let us recall the fact that since Gaul appeared in history, there has been a constant succession of invasions. "Europe," writes a French scholar, "is a small peninsula joined to Asia and Africa," and its western part, that is, that which was one day destined to become France, "is a cul-de-sac into which the human tide, flowing in from the east or the south — driven forward by some unknown impulse — has blended the deposits left by one incursion after another." [3]

All the historic races which have succeeded one another upon the soil of France can be distinguished in the midst of the later populations with which they have become blended. They have discovered the secret of co-existence and of interpenetration in such a way that today they form a united nation. But what a succession of stages had to be passed before this unity was reached! Those who wish to know what a nation is should examine these deep things of history, and realize how great was the work of coordination

[3] Breuil, quoted in *Histoire de la nation française,* I, 120.

and crystallization which, at certain periods (for instance toward the end of the third century before Christ), "led certain groups to establish vast and strong political unities." [4]

Moreover, we ought not to reduce the history of a nation to a struggle between two opposing races, one which dominates and one which is dominated. The truth is far more complex than that. The matter provided by the alluvial soil deposited upon the same spot by very different races has been disciplined by the spirit. But who can penetrate this mysterious action of the spirit? Let us say simply, with the French scholar whom I have already quoted, that "almost everywhere ethnic blends have been amalgamated by religious or linguistic affinities, and above all recast by similar habits and customs, by collective obligations, by the common necessity to conquer, to expand, and to hope, which is at the basis of every political group which deserves the name of nation." [5]

Has the church had any share in this process of national development? And if so, what? It is impossible until we have gathered up the lessons of history to examine the question: What ought the church to be within the nation from the doctrinal point of view?

France, which used to be called Gaul, offers a striking example for our consideration. When Christianity entered Roman Gaul religious unity had already been established for a long time past, in the sense that the gods of Gaul were united with the gods of Rome. The inhabitants of Gaul had given "to their chief deities the names, the attributes, the legends, even the outward appearance of the great Roman deities." [6] The unity of Gaul, under Latin rule, was

[4] Jean Brunhes, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 147.
[6] Camille Jullian, *Gallia*, pp. 207, 209 (Paris, Hachette, 1912).

soon established in the name of and to the advantage of the divinities of the Greco-Roman pantheon.

It was only at the close of the fourth century that Christianity triumphed in Gaul, thanks very largely to St. Martin, bishop of Tours, whose influence was very strong. It was then that the Gallo-Roman aristocracy became Christian. The church was gradually organized, being modeled on the pattern of the political society within which, after religious peace had been concluded, the Christians were able at last to find a place. The authoritarian principles and the administrative customs of the empire were introduced into the church. A hierarchy of metropolitans and bishops was set side by side with the imperial officials. And when the imperial authority vanished, "the Christian church bore within herself an image of the institutions of the empire and part of her spirit."

This remark by the great historian Fustel de Coulanges emphasizes the strength of the bonds which, from the fourth century onwards, united the life of the church with the development of the French nation. During the whole of the Middle Ages when the French monarchy was seeking to establish its unity, the Christian church represented the traditions and the rules of the Roman Empire.[7]

Then there is another point to note. The church was born in the Roman state which had been first of all her enemy and then became her ally. But after the barbarian invasions and the fall of Rome, when new political entities were in process of formation, they arose within the church, which during the time of persecution had not ceased to maintain her universal character. Quite naturally and spontaneously the new nations sought the support of the church, its counsels, its traditions and its influence. Thus the church was associated more or less intimately, accord-

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 234.

ing to place and circumstance, but always very closely, with the growth of the nations which inherited the Roman Empire.

In France for fifteen hundred years the life of the church was interwoven with the life of the nation. In countless ways she took the initiative in such spheres as the education of the young, the care of the sick, and the assistance of people in all kinds of trouble and misery. Some of the monks cultivated the soil, while others helped the people of France to realize that they had a divine vocation, that God had charged the French people with a universal mission. *Gesta Dei per Francos!* From the fourth to the fifteenth century the church was one of the most effective instruments of the political, intellectual and social unity of the French nation, having already given their nation its religious unity.

The national tragedy which followed the reform movement of the sixteenth century in France reveals still more strikingly the part played by the Catholic Church in the development of the nation. By the policy of ruthless suppression of heresy which she proclaimed and supported with all her power, by the part which she played in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the Roman Church was to a large extent responsible not only for the troubles which agitated the life of France for more than two hundred years, but for the violent reaction which took place in the eighteenth century, which was directed against the political action of the church and its influence in every part of the national life. This reaction became still stronger when, in the nineteenth century (after the wars of the Revolution and of the Empire) the Roman Church tried, time after time, to recapture her political influence. The concrete problem of the relation between the Christian churches and the French nation cannot be understood at

all unless we remember: (*a*) that for many centuries the Roman Catholic Church played a great part in the political life of the nation, as well as in its social and intellectual life; and (*b*) that one section of the French people, since the eighteenth century, has offered an increasingly hostile resistance to the encroachments of the same church in the actual political domain. We must never forget that anti-clericalism — that is to say, the resolve to eliminate the Roman Church from the political life of the nation — has played a part in France which cannot be exaggerated. All this long past, with its ebb and flow, means that at the present moment the great problem, church, nation, and state, implies to a French mind concrete data which a doctrinal study of the question has no right to ignore.

I open the Bible, I make myself listen, in the fellowship of the church, to the revelation which God gives in the Holy Scriptures. Has the nation a place in this revelation? And since in these days we are fond of constructing doctrines on the basis of the distinction between different "orders," to what "order" does the nation belong?

Certainly not to the order of creation. The distinctions between the sexes, marriage, the family and society depend incontestably upon the order of creation. The nations, on the contrary, do not appear till after the fall, and even after the flood. The mysterious but very significant story of the tower of Babel shows, in the division of the descendants of Noah into nations, one of the fruits of sin, a punishment which God inflicts upon "unified humanity," undertaking proudly to build a city whose towers should reach unto heaven. Father Fessard has written recently:

> Perhaps we have not sufficiently noted the parallelism of this scene with that of the Garden of Eden. It is, however, very striking, even in its inclusion of certain anthropomorphic features. I am sure that I am not going too far in my interpreta-

tion, as a Christian, of the Scriptures for the ordering of life, if I say that just as the sin of Adam represents original sin in the *individual,* so the building of the tower of Babel represents original sin in *society,* as such.

This, he continues, is the sin which breeds pride in group form, first of all that of a nation which deifies itself, but still more that of humanity which desires to create the new man . . . without God.[8]

Thus the division of humanity, which is in bondage to sin, into nations, belongs to the order of the fall. Notwithstanding the sovereign action of God, the nations do not escape from it. "He increaseth the nations and destroyeth them: He enlargeth the nations and straighteneth them again."[9] The birth, the life, the death of a nation, the absorption of one nation by another are normal phenomena for the people in the Bible. Like civilizations, nations are mortal. And the Christian who has learned from the Holy Scriptures that "all nations before Him are as nothing"[10] will not be astonished at this truth as others might be.

And yet in his providence God uses the nation itself, the result of sin, as a means of preserving humanity from worse disorders. Like the state, but in a different way, the nation helps to check the unrestrained indulgence of men's appetites which would lead them into the chaos of animal conflict. Without using the constraint proper to the state, by the one fact that the nation binds her citizens together by common interests and common necessities in face of common dangers she leads them to repress their mutual egoism and to submit to an end willed by all and for all. Thus the nation is the school in which God wishes to teach man that He has brought him into being not in order that

[8] *Pax Nostra,* p. 251 (Paris, Grasset, 1936).
[9] Job 12:23. [10] Isa. 40:17.

he should live alone, seeking and finding his end in himself, but that he should live with others, in a society where he serves his apprenticeship to the only true life, life in community, freely accepted and freely practiced. Thus we may say that the nation depends upon the order of preservation. Assuredly this accomplishment of the life of the person in the social life would have been realized apart from the fall in the family and in the human society, which belong, as we have already seen, to the order of creation. But sin has broken all the ties of community willed by God, and it is in the nation, where families are forced to realize their solidarity in the pursuit of a common end, that man is called to meet the problem of human community and to discover that its solution demands that he accept and desire liberation from his personal self-centeredness.

Let me repeat it once again: God is the Lord of the nations. " He hath made of one blood all nations of men," said Paul at Athens, " for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." [11] Thus the diversity of the nations, with the genius proper to each of them, is willed by God, but this does not impair the unity of their origin, nor does it place any obstacle in the way of the unity, in Christ, of the children of God.

Does what has just been said about the nations in general apply to the Jewish nation? Let us recognize that the latter belongs to the order of redemption. The fruit of a divine election, honored by the covenant with God, before the coming of Jesus Christ she was the ancient church, the church which waits until the heavens are opened and God descends upon the earth. But she is also the rebel nation, toward whom, all the day long, God is spreading

[11] Acts 17:26.

out his hands.[12] Because she has rejected the well-beloved Son the Kingdom shall be taken away from her and given to others. However, a way of hope and of salvation remains open to her, which she will not enter "until the fullness of the Gentiles [nations] be come in."[13] Then the division of the nations, the fruit of and chastisement for sin, will become, by the grace of God, a source of blessing for humanity. "In that day," says Isaiah, "shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land; whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my Hands, and Israel mine inheritance."[14]

This is, in brief compass, the significance of the nation from the point of view of revelation. What part should the church have in the life of the nation? Here we are not concerned with a study of history but with examining in the light of revealed doctrine whether the church has her own mission to fulfill within the nation, and if so, what is this mission? But first of all, what is the church with which we are here concerned?

For the purpose of the paper it will be sufficient to indicate in a few words the doctrine of the church represented in it.

Within the nation the church may appear to be one association alongside of others. And yet she does not in any way resemble other associations. She is not a human institution, a group of men and women which is the fruit of an initiative taken by man. She has no connection with a society for moral culture. She is the church, the assembly of believers, which God, by means of Christ, has called to know and to serve him. She is willed eternally by God; this will of God is accomplished by Christ in the body of which he is the Head. It is the divine initiative which has

[12] Isa. 65:2. [13] Rom. 11:25. [14] Isa. 19:24–25.

founded the church, and it is his action which maintains her. In the midst of sinful humanity, and therefore in the heart of the nation, the church is an enduring miracle of the grace of God.

And this remains true in spite of all the church's imperfections and frailties, the divisions which rend her life asunder, the sin of men and women who yet are and desire to be her loyal members. So far as she proclaims Jesus Christ, preaches the Word of God and administers the sacraments, the church fulfills the mission which has been assigned to her by her Head. At no moment and under no form has she the right to substitute herself for Jesus Christ. Her sole mission is to witness to her only Lord and Saviour.

The church is called to exercise this mission within a definite nation. It is this fact which causes the various problems which we must now examine.

But even before we begin to examine them there is one remark which I must make. The church is in the nation, not only because she proclaims the gospel to the nation in the national language, because her sanctuaries are built upon the national soil, because her action tends to penetrate the people as a whole, but also because her members are citizens of the nations. This is a situation which is in the highest degree paradoxical. In the church the members are aware that they belong to a society which is totally different from all those to which, as citizens, they are attached within the nation. They belong to two worlds. And the church, too, belongs to two worlds. In the one, the world of eternal realities, she finds her true city; in the other, the nation in which God asks her to bear her witness, she is at home because it is the fatherland of her members; but she cannot and she ought not to forget that her origin is not of this world and that she must always help men to enter into and walk along the

path to their true fatherland, "that which is in the heavens."

After that, can we speak of a "national" church? Let us admit that this kind of language leads to the most serious confusion of thought. It conceals the supra-national character of the church; it implies an acquiescence in a parcelling out of the Body of Christ, added to that caused by doctrinal divisions, and it permits people to imagine that the unity of the church is based primarily upon nationality.

A national church does not avoid the dangers inherent in her situation unless:

(1) her constitution indicates in the most precise and clear way that only the "faithful" — in the Christian sense of this phrase — are members of the church;

(2) the church welcomes with open arms the faithful from other nations who are living within her own land;

(3) the church shows clearly, by her missionary work in pagan lands, as well as by her close union with churches of the same confession, that she does not limit her horizon to the national frontiers;

(4) the church safeguards her spiritual independence, not only with regard to the state, but also with regard to the nation, for public opinion may wish to exert a pressure upon the national church which is incompatible with the preservation of her independence.

Then, are we not led to assert that the church ought not to be tied to the state, whether by the acceptance of an official position which makes the church one of the powers of the state and her ministers officials paid by the state, by a convention (concordat, or anything else of that kind) implying a possible return for the services rendered by the church to the nation, even by actual grants of money?

To this I would answer that although the church is

bound to preserve her spiritual independence at all costs, this does not seem to me to exclude entirely all juridical financial relations between the church and the state. However, it is evident that the more the church is free from all connection with the state and from all indebtedness to the official support of the state, the easier it is for her when she is attacked or even persecuted to be faithful to the accomplishment of her unique mission. The more, on the contrary, that she seeks and finds in the state a moral and material support, the more difficult it will be for her to be the witness which God wishes her to be in all respects and under all circumstances.

The church ought not to consent to be at the service of the nation, nor should the nation allow the church to interfere with those spheres of national life which do not come under her jurisdiction. It will be necessary to make certain observations on both these topics.

Let us first of all guard against a misunderstanding. The members of the church are bound, in so far as they are citizens of the nation, to serve her, in all that is not opposed to that which they owe to God, all the more loyally, because both the obligation to serve the nation and the method of doing this come from God. In all the spheres of political, social and intellectual life in which their profession or their culture makes it possible for them to judge, it is both their right and their duty to form a personal opinion upon the problems raised by the nation, and to bring their actions and their words into accordance with this opinion; here, however, we are not dealing with what is said and done by the members of the church either individually or in groups as laymen or as members of the ordained ministry as citizens, and as Christian citizens. The faithful, in smaller or larger groups, may in very different ways feel themselves called to intervene in the life of the nation, to pronounce

an opinion upon this or that national problem: they are not the church. Some members of the ordained ministry, some pastors, may, in certain circumstances, seek to take action in this or that region of the national life; they are not the church. We cannot and we ought not to speak of the action of the church save when this action has been decided by the doctrinal and disciplinary authority of the church: for instance, by the pope in the Roman Catholic Church, or by the National Synod in the Reformed Church, or indeed, where several Reformed churches exist side by side, the organ to which they have entrusted the duty of representing them to the nation. It is in this sense alone that I am here thinking of the action of the church.

What does it mean for the church to be at the service of the nation? It certainly does not mean that it is the duty of the church to teach the faithful that they have certain duties toward their own country, and that the first of these duties is love of country. The church is serving *God,* and not the nation. But the church would be serving the *nation,* and not God, were she to allow her members to believe, either that the service of the nation can be equated with the service of God, or that it has an absolute character, or that anyone save God has the right to determine what their patriotism ought to be. The same would be true if the church were to allow her claim that her mission transcends all national interests to be watered down, however legitimate these interests may be and however clear a duty it may be for Christian citizens to support and defend them. To confuse the mission of the church with national ends would be fatal for the church; the mission of the church is of a different nature from these national ends; it is concerned solely with the salvation of man and his eternal destiny.

With still more reason the church ought not to allow

herself to be used by the nation for its own purposes, even in the interests of the nation, especially if these purposes have no connection with the mission of the church. For instance, it is not the business of the church to put her signature to an appeal, addressed to the nation, calling for subscriptions to a public loan. Other temptations to make use of the church exist and will continue to occur. In refusing to give way to them the church must seize the opportunity to define clearly her unique position within the nation.

It is, of course, evident that the menace of war, and war itself, affecting the nation as a whole, presents the church with problems of peculiar gravity. As these will be studied in detail in another volume in this series they will not be examined here.

Although the church is at the service of God within the nation, and resolutely faithful to her sole mission of witness, she will not be indifferent to the national life. Because her loyal members participate in this national life, because she is their life, because to a certain extent it is they who form the nation, the church is aware of every vibration in the national life. She shares in the joys and sorrows of the nation, but she does not share in its anger nor in its hatred. And because she must be always and supremely the presence of Jesus Christ in the nation, indissolubly united to her Lord who wept over the Holy City, she knows how to summon the nation to humiliation and repentance, she humbles herself and repents with and for the nation, thus bearing witness to the destiny of the nation, which infinitely transcends all human achievements.

The nation, as I have already said, must not permit the church to interfere in those spheres of the national life which do not concern her. But is it really true that there are spheres in the life of the nation which are entirely

outside the competence of the church? Is it not true that human beings are engaged in these spheres, and since they compose the church, is it not the duty of the church to stand by them as the vigilant witness to the will of God? Without reopening the question — so violently disputed — of the primacy of the spiritual, are we not justified in claiming that the spiritual is involved in all human activity and thus that the church cannot be indifferent to it?

The problem is a delicate one. I would say frankly that I do not think the same solution can be given in each nation. In one nation the intervention of the church in a certain domain of public life will be regarded as a normal, perhaps even desirable proceeding, while in the adjoining nation such intervention would be severely condemned. These different reactions are sometimes due to questions of principle, but more often to collective reactions due to a long history of good or bad relations between the church and the nation, or between the church and an important section of the nation. Why not say frankly that French opinion would not allow the church to take steps which the greater part of British public opinion would — upon the whole — consider to be in accordance with the mission of the church? Perhaps in certain countries national opinion would render a great service to the church by persuading her not to compromise herself by a definite political attitude, and simply to remain exclusively faithful to her mission which she has received from Jesus Christ.

I do not think that anyone will deny that the church is called to denounce unceasingly those evils which, since they pervert human souls, corrupt the very sources of national life; that even if she does not initiate certain crusades herself she ought to give them the support of her authority; that in face of social evils and wrongs she ought to make

the voice of the Christian conscience heard; that, faced by the serious dangers which menace the peace of the nation or of humanity, she ought to proclaim the demands of the gospel with reference to men and nations. Further, everyone will admit, I am sure, that the church ought to warn, not only the faithful, but the whole nation, against attacks — open and concealed — on the part of militant atheism, not only on the Christian faith itself, but on every form of religious belief; it is also her duty to show clearly, in the sight of the nation, the incompatibility of certain political or economic doctrines, whatever their origin may be, with the essential affirmations of Christianity. But in carrying out these tasks the church must take care that she does not slip from the religious sphere into the political or economic sphere; she must see to it that she is, and that she remains, simply and solely the church which bears witness to the Word of God, and proclaims Jesus Christ.

To those who claim that the church ought to *serve* the nation I would say: The greatest service that the church can render the nation is to be the church. And this remains true whether the nation as a whole is favorable to the church or indifferent to her, and even if the nation regards the church with distrust or hostility.

To the faithful, first and foremost, the church must be the church. Within the life of the nation they may be, and often are, opposed to one another by their political convictions and their social ideas. They may even come into conflict with one another; sometimes, alas, they are tempted to hate one another! If the church allows herself to be drawn into their conflicts, they will be the first to blame her, perhaps even to leave her. For them she will no longer be the church. On the other hand, she will remain the church if she teaches them the duty of acquiring a

Christian idea of the nation, if she invites them to study, as Christians, all the problems which are raised by the life of the nation, and to promote this study within groups of Christians; if, finally, she persuades them that she wants to help them to act as Christians in the accomplishment of their human task whatever it may be.

The church is, and ought to be, the one and only place where all the citizens who are drawn into opposite camps by their political or social conflicts can escape from the obsession of these difficult problems in the national life; the church is the only place where, together, they invoke Our Father and ask him, " Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us "; the church is the only place where together they approach the table of the Lord and share in the same Body and Blood. This church, which is the church of Jesus Christ, renders the nation the only service which the latter ought to receive from her; and by the grace of God she gives to the nation men who, because their life is " rooted in love," are henceforth within her servants of truth, justice and peace. But the church is, and also ought to be, the only place where the citizens of a nation are reminded not only that the nation is not an end in itself, not only that the nation ought to be in community with other nations, for the sake of the common good of humanity, but still more and above all, that the ultimate end assigned to it by God is, beyond all national distinctions, the Kingdom where " God shall be all in all."

CHURCH AND NATION

by

HANNS LILJE

CHURCH AND NATION

In its wider aspect, the problem of church and nation is concerned with the general Christian attitude to community life as a whole. This entails an inquiry into the causes and aspects of the present crisis in community life throughout the world, and also into the solution which Christianity offers not only to the individual problems raised by this crisis, but also to the great fundamental problems of human society in general.

The more restricted aspect of the inquiry, as shown more especially in the German formula, "*Kirche, Volk und Staat,*" deals with the Christian understanding of "folk," as represented today in various aspects of the new folk consciousness.

In its second more specialized meaning this question confronts the church with one of the most fundamental problems in the cultural life of the modern world, for it is one of the most urgent tasks of the Christian church in our times to hear and to answer, on the basis of the Scriptures and the confessions, the question raised in many parts of the world by the new folk consciousness.

I. THE REVIVAL OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE PRESENT CRISIS IN HUMAN COMMUNITY

Any diagnosis of this revival must start from the same considerations as those underlying the Christian attitude to the whole problem of modern society: namely, the breaking up of all social forms throughout the present-day world. This problem of "mass disintegration," the end-

product namely of a completely individualized age, manifests itself in the dissolution of all social relationships, thus rendering null and void all binding order and producing a state of chaos in which any true and sincere relation between man and man is no longer possible.

During the last ten years, this state of affairs has been the constant preoccupation of Western philosophy and theology. The church also has given much thought to the same phenomena and has endeavored to find means to overcome them. Hence the discussions on the theology of " the orders," which has opened up new avenues of thought for Christianity.

From this point of view, however, the problem of nationality assumes still another meaning. It is not just one among many possible means for overcoming the present-day crisis in society. " Nationality," as conceived throughout large areas of the modern world, and, if we are not mistaken, particularly so at certain focuses of supreme historical importance, no longer presents a problem, but is an actually experienced historical fact. This historical experience confronts man with all the signs of historical reality. Large bodies of young people nowadays, among those nations in the grip of a newly awakened national consciousness, look on their nationality as *the* primary and fundamental reality of all. It forms the starting point of all their thinking, and no way of thinking which does not respect this new viewpoint can, in their eyes, measure up to reality. In their eyes, the concept " nation " does not, therefore, raise any problems or questions; they regard it as a sign of the emergence in history of primeval forces which mold and determine the life of man; they experience it as a form of historical power and reality to which all individuals must of necessity be subordinate, forming as it does the very basis of life for the community as well as for the individual.

This being so, it is obviously the duty of the church to reconsider this problem carefully and to arrive at a clear conception of its attitude toward it. In so doing it will make a twofold discovery. On the one hand, it must needs undergo the test of considering what degree of reality its message possesses when measured against the reality of national consciousness; and on the other hand, it will discover that its consideration of this problem does not deal merely with a side issue but involves a consideration of the very basis of its faith.

2. THE REALITY OF NATIONALITY

A valuable indication of the answer to the question what constitutes a nation is given by the peculiar character of the re-emergence, in the immediate past, of national consciousness as a powerful historical force. For those whose entire sociological philosophy is based on the fact of nationality, as constituting the primordial and all-inclusive reality, it is useless to begin with a *theory* of the nature of nationality. For many people today, their nationality is above all a concrete fact and a newly experienced historical reality. The forms of social life having broken up, the collective will of a people is thrown back upon its natural foundations, that is, its inherent national genius. With this as a starting point, merely theoretical considerations must necessarily take a back seat. Consequently the historical experience of national life is of greater importance than any single question as to its nature and its constituent factors. This is why theories of nationality are often dismissed as mere intellectualism, and stress is laid on the instinctive blood relationship and the historical heritage of the national community life. The one key to an understanding of nationality is held to consist in participation in the common historical experience of the birth and growth of a nation.

The deprecation of all merely intellectual theories of nationality is the expression of a perfectly sound attitude. For up to the present it has not proved possible completely to explain the phenomenon of nationality on purely rational lines. "So far every sociology has suffered shipwreck on the problem of nationality." [1] Actually the main significance of such theories of nationality as we possess is to act as pointers to the various component elements of national life. Consequently all these theories emphasize as a rule one or more of the formative factors in the life of a people, such as consanguinity, a common biological descent, or the manner of life as conditioned by climate, the soil, or the geographical lie of the land — a connection much stressed by the new school of geo-political research — common customs, or something else.

All these current theories of nationality enshrine, as a rule, one aspect of the truth. The same applies to the view that race is the foundation of national life. To obviate any misunderstanding, the following should be noted: whereas the new line of political thought in Germany is based on the race, this must not be taken as a simple biological concept, but as a symbol of organic national unity, physically, mentally and spiritually.

There is only one traditional theory of nationality which can be dismissed straight away as lacking in realism, namely the purely rationalistic explanation. The theory of nationality which sees in the communal life of a nation the result of a *contrat social* is entirely false, for the simple reason that it awakens the false notion that this community life is something which is brought about by the rational exercise of the common will of those concerned. But the characteristic feature of nationality lies precisely in its very quality of givenness or pre-existence; it is a state which

[1] Sasse, *Das Volk nach der Lehre der evangelischen Kirche* (1933), p. 24.

exists prior to our considerations and decisions, so that our nationality confronts us with a pre-existent claim. Any theory of nationality which compares it to a voluntary society denies thereby the essential difference existing between the communal life of a nation and every other form of human society which rests on voluntary association.

The theories of nationality sponsored by German romanticism and philosophy were the first to oppose such rationalistic conceptions by drawing attention once more to the reality of national community. It is not merely a matter of chance that these theories originated at a time of national decline, when the longing for national greatness broke forth with redoubled vigor; and for that very reason they were able to describe most clearly the reality and peculiar significance of nationality. Whereas the idealists Fichte and Hegel upheld the claims of the fatherland and clearly described its super-individual grandeur and authority, romanticism, casting its net still wider, rediscovered and described the individual and specific features of a nation, namely the mother tongue, the land and a common historical heritage. In so doing they added considerably to our understanding of nationality, inasmuch as they drew attention to the importance for a people of a common historical destiny. For the life of a people cannot be explained merely by natural factors: its common historical destiny is equally important. It is precisely this common historical destiny which develops a nation out of the natural circumstances in which it originates. The romantic movement first drew attention to the fact that a nation cannot be exclusively explained either as the product of its biological antecedents or of some theoretical considerations, but that it is at the same time a corporeal and spiritual entity — to use an expression of Hamann, that great counterpart of Kant.

This last consideration must form the starting point of every modern theory of nation and nationality; i.e., any description of the essential nature of a people must take into account two things:

The natural bases of nation and nationality, the natural component parts, may vary greatly. But the foundation always rests in some way or another on descent from a common blood stock. Race, in the narrower or wider sense, blood relationship and soil do, as a matter of fact, form the natural foundations of a people. It is obvious that this racial foundation does not necessarily involve any special racial " purity " — the scientific possibility or probability of which need not be discussed here. A nation may equally well result from the mixture of various " pure " races, and nevertheless produce a common natural type, as shown in stature, build, and the color of skin and hair. Every serious student of ethnology is, moreover, aware that the possession of similar external characteristics does not necessarily imply a common national stock. There are other external natural phenomena which are equally important, more particularly those on which modern geo-political research lays special stress, namely external conditions of life due to a common habitat, and climatic and geographical unity or dissimilarity. And finally, to all these external considerations must be added those factors, dependent on the natural conditions of life, which form and determine the common *customs* of a people.

The second constituent element in the life of a nation consists in its historical background. Therein lies, as a matter of fact, the most important observation on the essence of nationality, for it points to the mystery which broods over the beginnings of all political life. This mystery consists in the emergence of a nation into history. The natural features of a people can neither entirely ex-

plain its experience nor describe the actual plenitude of its life. The rise of a nation, in the fullest sense, is a historical process as little capable of explanation as any other great fact of history. The perception of this fact has a threefold significance.

Full nationality is only achieved when a people enters the realm of history. The real existence of a nation first begins in that moment in time when it enters the community of nations as an entity which is subject to the molding forces of history and in its turn shapes the course of history. It is equally possible for a nation to relapse once more into the nonhistorical condition from which it sprang: whereupon its existence as a people actually ceases. Historical examples of this may be seen in the state of suspended animation of certain tribes of the Near East and of northern Egypt, which have regressed from a position of historical eminence to the nonhistorical condition of the fellahin. On the other hand, if a people becomes conscious once more of its origin, the phenomenon of national " rebirth " takes place, in virtue of which it once more becomes historically effective.

The consciousness, therefore, of a historical " vocation " or " mission " forms an integral part of the essence of a nation. When a nation lays claim to such a historical mission, this is not a false exaggeration of its own national importance — that occurs only when it claims a false absolutism or assumes divine powers — but the expression of its will to be a nation in the true historical sense of the word. The historical life of a people in the fullest sense waxes and wanes in proportion to its consciousness of such a mission. What precisely determines the entry of a nation into history remains completely inexplicable. It is one of the great mysteries of world history by what process a people, hitherto invisible on the stage of world history,

suddenly emerges into historical prominence and activity and begins to act as an independent entity in virtue of a common calling and of consciousness of a common mission. Such activity and an actual historical experience of its vocation are the necessary conditions for complete emergence of a nation. Whatever different forms the consciousness of such a calling may take — ranging in degree from a lust for conquest to a consciousness of a mission for peace — it is this process which constitutes the actual process of becoming a nation. It is primarily through the close, indissoluble mingling of both these lines of development, the one conditioned by natural circumstances, the other by the sense of a historical mission, that the final growth into full national maturity is achieved. The term " nation " is only then bestowed on a people when it has effectively entered the realm of history.

The two expressions of the full emergence of a nation into history are language and statecraft.

Language is not only the noblest, but also the most definite, expression of national consciousness. It is impossible to imagine any nation which is really effective historically without a language of its own, although the boundaries of language and nationality do not always coincide. Nevertheless, on principle, a mother tongue is the clearest expression of the fact that a people has become a spiritual entity, for language is the vessel charged with the spiritual and historical, the political and natural heritage of a nation. Tribal conglomerations, emerging from a prehistoric or subhistoric existence, first enter the full light of history when they are able to express their own spiritual destiny in their own individual language.

If language is the essential expression of the spiritual character of a nation, the shaping of its political destiny is mainly dependent on the state. But here also it becomes

necessary to draw attention to the fact that the frontiers of a people do not necessarily coincide with its political frontiers. Thus, according to the statements of Dr. May, a theologian who has contributed most valuable researches on the nature of nationality, there exist in the eleven newly formed post-war states of southeastern Europe thirty-five million people who are obliged to live, not within their own political boundaries, but as national minorities. Of course these cases are exceptional and exhibit all those difficulties which must needs arise wherever " the right of self-determination of a people " has not been realized. Nevertheless, it is still possible even under such hard historical circumstances for a people of strong national character to maintain its spiritual integrity, its customs, and the form of civilization appropriate to its national genius.

But such exceptions in no wise alter the fact that, on principle, a nation achieves full historical maturity under its own political form of government. Full historical development is only then attained when a nation has found its own political form. This process of taking political shape may stretch over long periods, and those nations which have taken a long time over the actual building up of their political structure are by no means those least capable of great historical achievement. But, on principle, it is not possible to conceive of full historical effectiveness without political self-government. Even separate national groups, existing as scattered communities (*diasporai*), usually maintain their life solely in virtue of the possession of a mother country with a political regime of its own. The ideal political development of a people is a national state where nation and state possess the same common boundaries and the political structure corresponds most closely to the national genius.

From this fundamental conception of the nature of

nationality there follows one more essential conclusion, namely, that a nation is not founded on the free association of individuals, and is moreover, as proved by its whole existence, completely exempt from the arbitrary decisions of individuals. A man has to accept the fact of his nationality as a pre-existent condition; he is as little able to choose his nationality as his sex — it is simply given to him, an endowment. Since his nation existed before him, so also it stands above him. From this it follows that an individual only attains to national consciousness when he experiences the claims which his national community has on him. Just as a people only attains full historical being when it becomes aware of its historical "calling," so an individual becomes conscious of being part of a nation when he experiences the authority and the claim which the nation makes on him. This authority which his country exercises over him is genuine authority. For the individual can neither terminate this relationship nor explain it; he remains subordinated to it in his whole being.

3. THE CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION OF THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY

All that has been said so far about the fact of nationality remains true without any reference to Christian belief. It is, therefore, not entirely a matter of chance that the re-emergence of national consciousness in many parts of the world does not as a rule proceed from any reawakening of the Christian spirit. On the contrary, there is an undeniable cleavage between the Christian and a purely national conception of life, which results in a state of tension and conflict at more than one place in the world, and this is true quite as much in the older Christian countries as in the younger churches in the mission field.

We are consequently faced with the question: What importance may be ascribed to the Christian view of national community?

We must start with the fact that neither the Bible nor the confessional statements of the Lutheran Reformation offer any coherent Christian doctrine of nationality. The Reformation taught that the church cannot give any specifically Christian doctrine of nationality to which the empirical life of nations must conform. Among the community of nations, the church exists *in* the world and not side by side with the world. That is why it is contrary to Lutheran teaching to attempt forcibly to mold the life of nations in accordance with any preconceived biblical or doctrinal theory. The only way in which the church can obtain clear insight into the nature of nationality is by a sober acknowledgment of actual historical facts. That is why neither Holy Scripture nor the doctrines of the Lutheran Church contain any developed teaching about nationality. The numerous references to the state, that other great phenomenon of the communal life of men, form a striking contrast to the casual and incidental references to the fact of nationality. And however much may be gleaned from these isolated remarks as to the proper behavior of Christians as members of a nation, they offer no consistent theory of nationality which could compete with existing ones, and be related to them either on equal or superior terms. This admission obviously does not mean that Christians are, therefore, left without any guidance as to the attitude they should adopt towards nationality. It only means that they must seek guidance from other aspects and fundamental truths of scriptural and Reformation doctrine. They will then discover that this larger body of witness provides the church, as well as the individual Christian, with definite guidance, clearly

expressed. The nation, as such, is not the subject matter of the Christian creed: but it exists within the strong and stable divine order from which it derives its true meaning.

In order to make this clear, we will now consider what the Scriptures have to say about nationality.

An exposition of Bible teaching about the national community meets with one important difficulty. Scriptural statements about what we nowadays understand by nation are by no means unambiguous, and in this they show a marked contrast to the Bible doctrine of the state. The New Testament especially is constantly revealing the historical fact that the primitive Christian community was aware that it coincided with the greatest, the most closely knit and impressive political system of its time — namely, that of imperial Rome. In contradistinction to this, the conception of nation was relegated to the background. This applies mainly to the New Testament, where only casual mention is made of " nation " in the modern sense, but it also applies to the Old Testament, where in spite of numerous references to other nations as well as to the national destiny of the people of Israel, one must admit that statements about nationality itself are, on the whole, meager.

It would obviously be completely false to conclude from this that the Bible says nothing of the Christian conception of nation. It goes without saying that the historical environment of biblical times, whether considered from the point of view of religious or of cultural history, was entirely different from the political and social situation of today. But it is much more important to point out that in order to understand the Bible view of nationality, the fact that nations and nationality come within the scope of the divine purpose is of much greater import than any reflections on a changing historical situation. There are three en-

tirely unambiguous features which characterize the main trend of biblical teaching on the subject of nationality, namely: (*a*) the doctrine of the unity of the human race; (*b*) the recognition that the plurality and diversity of nations is a condition willed by God, and (*c*) that all national differences are in principle annulled in the church and in the expectation of the coming again of the Lord.

(a) *The Unity of the Human Race.* Every exposition of scriptural teaching about nations and nationality must start from the basic conception of the unity of mankind. Everything, of course, depends on making it quite clear what constitutes the special character of this basic conception of the Scriptures regarding the unity of the human race. Its basis is theocentric: *One* God, *one* Creator, *one* Lord of the world, and therefore also *one* humanity. This starting point differs entirely from the idea of the unification of mankind effected by means of some universal organization of humanity. For all statements about the unity of the human race are based on the biblical accounts of the creation. These accounts express with particular clearness the idea that from God's point of view mankind is essentially one — a view which was later adopted and developed as a self-evident scriptural truth in the Psalms and the historical books of the Old Testament as well as in the apostolic writings of the New Testament. From the point of view of man the situation may, of course, appear very different. But man's intellect alone is of itself unable to grasp this divinely appointed state of things, for men's minds either tend toward the international activism of the humanitarian, who would deny the differences among nations, or they tend to deify nationality after the manner of the nationalist, who exaggerates the differences that exist among nations. The Bible, on the other hand, maintains the fundamental view that the unity of the human race

is a self-evident corollary of the belief in *one* God, the Creator and Sovereign of the world.

Thence follows a specific interpretation of its history. It is one of the special merits of the Old Testament, compared with the records of other religions, that it presents a coherent view of history. The classical example of this is found in the prophetic books of the Old Testament. The Old Testament prophets, who were well aware of the differences among nations, both in character and historical development, nevertheless bore striking testimony before the nation to the essential unity of their destiny, with remarkable courage considering their situation. To the prophets the diversity existing among nations did not appear as mere casual juxtaposition, each nation pursuing its own historical path independently of the others, but they addressed their message to all nations, including their own people, as being bound in one common destiny prepared for them by the one God, Sovereign of the world and of all nations and of history. It needs no elaborate proof to show that such a conception of history lifted Old Testament prophecy far above contemporaneous interpretations of history. Indeed it has quite rightly been hailed as the fount and origin of all the more profound conceptions of history, and the high place among ancient historical documents accorded to the historical accounts given in the books of Samuel and Kings is also due to the fact that their authors were able to perceive, amid the diversity of national destinies, the underlying unity of all historical fate. The idea of the unity of the human race has, therefore, very far-reaching consequences.

This doctrine of the fundamental unity of the human race finds particularly clear expression in all those passages which emphasize the fundamental limitations of Hebrew national consciousness. As is well known, one of

the most interesting and illuminating phenomena of the history of religions consists precisely in the decisiveness with which, just when the religious history of the Israelites reaches its highest levels, Israel's claim to national absolutism is most resolutely opposed.[2] "Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?" That is to say, the national history of Israel follows the same uniform plan which God pursues with the human race, wherein all nations have their place, Israel as well as all the others. This view becomes especially significant when one keeps clearly in mind the uniqueness imparted to the Old Testament people of God in the divine plan of redemption. When speaking of the divinely appointed redemptive mission of Israel, it is important that this should not be confused with any national excellence. Israel possesses no special place among the nations in virtue of its history; for other nations also are subject to the Lord. The uniqueness and special character of the Old Testament people of God rests on one fact alone, which cannot be explained by the natural origins of Israel, the fact namely that the people of Israel were specially chosen and called to be the vehicle of God's revelation to man. But this is not a purely natural fact, nor is it an attribute of the national and political existence of Israel.

This is plainly stated in all those passages describing the fulfilment of God's uniform plan for the history of the world among the non-Israelitic or "heathen" nations. It is equally unique in the history of religion that in the Old Testament the divine will, as operative in the history of nations, is described as using other nations and their leading personalities with the same sovereign freedom as it

[2] Amos 9:7.

does Israel. It can thus come about that a king of foreign origin, like Cyrus, can actually be called " the anointed of the Lord," that is a messiah, because he fulfills a special divine purpose in the history of nations.[3] Concrete political history must, therefore, testify that God has only one uniform plan for the world which presupposes the fundamental unity of mankind. As is well known, this line of thought, begun in the prophetic books of the Old Testament, is carried on right through to the apocalyptic books of the New Testament, including the synoptic as well as the Johannine writings. The destiny of the nations of the world is a coherent unity: all nations have a place in God's plan, however different their historical development may be in detail. The unity of the human race follows therefore from the divine ruling of the world, which, according to the Bible, will continue to the end of history.

(b) *The Multiplicity of Nations.* The fact that, according to the Scriptures, the unity of the human race is not the result of human speculation or of human organization but results from God's uniform rule over the world, finds striking corroboration in the fact that the diversity of nations is never denied, neither their varied origin, their different character, nor their different historical destiny. On the contrary, the multiplicity and variety of nations is recognized as a fact in accordance with the will of God.

The fact that there are many nations is dependent on God's creative will and on his sovereignty over history. The *locus classicus scripturae* for this is Acts 17:26, where the general biblical view is summed up, namely, that the entire fate of nations — that is, not only their natural existence, but their historical development and their course throughout the whole of world history — rests on

[3] Isa. 45:1.

the will of God, the Creator. Just as the existence of nations points to God their creator, so the continual shaping of the destinies of nations points to the *creati continua.*

A realistic study of biblical teaching prohibits any explanation of the existence of nations merely as an " order of creation." This idea, if indeed it has any place in biblical thought, can certainly not be applied to the continued existence of nations. For if one attempted to explain the nations of the world, in all their variety, as the expression of a divine order of creation (neglecting for the moment any examination of the concept itself), it would imply that humanity had received directly from God its national differences. But such an idea is unsupported by any exegetical statement. There exists no text in the Bible authorizing the view that the existence of nations is the immediate consequence of God's creation. Such an interpretation of the Bible first arose from a conception which originated in the Romantic school and was incidentally, although inaccurately, ascribed to Luther. The Bible text itself gives no support to such a view.

On the other hand, it would, of course, be equally false to base an explanation of the multiplicity of nations solely on the story of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11). Careful exegesis will only permit one to state with certainty that in the Bible the existence of different nations in the world is mentioned only after the flood. The fact of this diversity in the world of nations is, therefore, fully admitted without any other dogmatic explanation of it being offered except that it is in accordance with the will of God.

The importance of the story of the tower of Babel really lies in its drawing attention to the limitations which circumscribe all national life. Differences in language and in the historical development of nations obviously result in an immediate curtailment of the original unity of the hu-

man race. It is represented as the result of human guilt, and therefore the multiplicity of nations is in fact an expression of man's fallen status. This is shown by the fact that differences in language, that finest instrument of the national genius, represent not only an enrichment of life (as taught by Goethe, who borrowed the idea from Herder, who in his turn derived it from Hamann), but also form an additional burden, nay, even a threat to the existence of any true community among nations. On the other hand, this tale of the building of the tower of Babel bears witness to the fact that in spite of a clear recognition of the differences existing among nations, the essential unity of the human race must not, in principle, be lost.

The biblical view of the differences that separate nations differs, therefore, in essence from any exclusively national or international conception. It is on a completely different plane. In order to make this clear, attention may be drawn to two considerations:

The difference lies first in the realism of the Bible. The difference in national development, which is the result of a difference in national destiny, is such an unmistakable fact that not to recognize it would be sheer delusion. The existence of different nations is, therefore, taken for granted throughout the whole of the Bible. The *locus classicus scripturae* in Acts 17:26, to which we have already referred, is not the only proof of this realism which accepts the differences among nations and their development, but a striking piece of evidence in its support can also be found in the emphatic manner in which St. Paul stresses his own national origin.[4]

Still more decisive, however, is that other fundamental biblical conception, namely that of the special *klesis* or vocation, which man may not deny, alter or annul. The

[4] E.g., Rom. 9:3; Phil. 3:5.

Pauline doctrine (1 Cor. 7) that every man must remain in his *klesis,* his "calling," should without doubt also apply to the attitude of the individual toward his nation. There can be no doubt that the Paul who counseled the slave to remain a slave and not seek emancipation would say the same of membership of a nation. The energy and warmth with which he speaks of his own nationality is striking proof of this. The oft-quoted text in Gal. 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek," means, as the context proves beyond a shadow of doubt, simply this: that differences of nationality, class and sex are, on principle, annulled through fellowship in Christ, but for that very reason they remain valid in actual practice. Only with this proviso has St. Paul's statement any real meaning; to use it in the sense of an organizational measure is to misuse it.

From all this it follows that the Bible recognizes and takes into account the distinctive characteristics of nations and of nationality.

(c) *The Double Limitation of Nationality.* Again, the fact that the Bible fully admits the absolute reality of nation and nationality becomes quite clear when one traces the limits which it lays down to nationality. In this connection two things are important. Nowhere in the Bible is nationality given absolute value. Nowhere is any final or definitive value ascribed to the fact of nationality, but it is always looked upon as forming only a part of a larger, historical divine order. It is however of supreme importance to recognize quite clearly the characteristic limits which the Bible sets to nationality. The very peculiarity of this limitation shows once again very clearly the importance which is ascribed to nationality itself.

Just as there is no scriptural authority for idolizing the nation, so the fact of nationality may not be disregarded. Neither the one nor the other attitude is compatible with

scriptural teaching. For the limits which the Bible sets to nationality cannot be used for the purposes of political organization in the sense of erecting a political system which would deny the idea of nationality. For these limits are the expression of a faith which exists on a plane other than that of politics.

The first limitation imposed on the conception of nationality is due to the factual existence of the church. Even the Old Testament indicates unequivocally that "God's people" may also be chosen from among other nations if the original people of God, namely Israel, should forfeit their calling and election. That precisely is the meaning of Amos 9:7. Everywhere where reference is made to the fact that salvation shall come to the "peoples" and the "islands," reference is made to the same fundamental idea that the national boundaries of Israel are transcended.

But this idea does not attain full development until we come to the New Testament conception of the church. The *ekklesia* consists of those who are called out of this world, out of this *aiōn*. This divine calling transcends the limits of all nationality. The old *aiōn* has been overcome in principle, and for the church the laws of the new *aiōn* are already in operation, as stated in the well known passage in Galatians 3:28. For the church, the multiplicity of nations no longer represents a barrier. On the contrary, it is emphatically stated that the wall of partition between Jews and heathen has been broken down (Eph. 2:14). The fact that membership of this church no longer takes any account of national barriers is an essential part of the biblical conception of the church. It should, however, be kept firmly in mind that the church transcends these barriers in just the same way as she transcends class barriers. As matters of historical fact their validity remains; just as a slave does not cease to be a slave by becoming a Christian,

so a Greek does not cease to be a Greek when he becomes a Christian. The whole of the New Testament bears convincing witness to this state of things. The fact that the language of the New Testament was Greek and not Hebrew is striking evidence of the fundamental transformation undergone by the original national Jewish character of the mother church. On the other hand, the New Testament itself testifies how slowly and with how much difficulty this process was realized, and makes it clear that the new position of the church was not achieved merely by an external, organized effort to overcome the originally Jewish character of the primitive church, but sprang from an entirely different conception of the nature of all reality. The invalidation of national frontiers by the church is a matter of faith and not of political organization.

The second still more decisive cause of the invalidation of national frontiers rests in the eschatological expectations of early Christianity. An obvious result of the expectation of the consummation of the Kingdom of God would be that the fundamental principles underlying the previous dispensation (including national differences) would be abolished by the second coming of Christ. In view of the expectation of the end of the world the fate of the various nations, in all their diversity of culture and history, was seen in the light of the great day of the second coming of Jesus Christ, when the destiny of the world would be fulfilled and the congregation of the faithful would be gathered in from among Jews and Gentiles. It follows from this line of thought, which was plainly of such fundamental importance for early Christianity, that the invalidation of national barriers did not rest on any politically organized will, but was an act of faith, functioning on a plane superior to that of historical and political life.

The modern Christian interpretation of nationality

must not lose sight of these fundamental principles laid down in the Bible, and they should moreover provide a practical guide to our present-day attitude to the nation and to nationality.

The fundamentals of our understanding of nationality as developed above will obviously assume a completely new aspect when considered in this context. This applies first to the question of the origin of the nation. The two-fold character of nationality, described above, resulting from the interplay of natural conditions and historical development, the combination of which we have said creates a nation, corresponds in Christian thought with the double reference to the creative activity of God and to his supremacy over history.

As far as the Christian is concerned, the natural conditions of nationality must point to God, the Creator. This is already implicit in the fact that nationality cannot be conceived in terms of an " order of creation." Such a conception, originating in the theology of the nineteenth century, is in any case, owing to its ambiguity and complexity, open to suspicion. But even if, instead of this, the more precise concept of the *ordinationes Dei* taken from the Lutheran creeds is adopted, this may nevertheless not be applied to nations in the sense that they are the product of an original divine ordinance. The Lutheran creeds recognize only three original *ordinationes Dei: matrimonium* (marriage and family); *auctoritas* (political authority); *ministerium verbi* (the office of preaching); and it is as well to stick to these admirably clear fundamental categories, for they form the cornerstones of the triangle of divine basic conditions of human life, and only in obedience to them can life be lived according to the will of God.

Nationality, however, is not identical with any of these fundamental categories, but it is quite obviously related

to all three. It is evident that by its *origin* it is indissolubly connected with the first of these divine basic ordinances, namely, the family. Its common origin in blood relationship and the continual biological renewal of a nation through family life is the most obvious proof of its connection with the divine order. Without such an origin it would be impossible to speak of a nation; it forms the elementary condition of its existence. To this extent a nation is palpably and incontrovertibly the product of the creative activity of God. That the continuity of human history is incessantly maintained and that even the most terrible disasters in human society are unable either to interrupt or to abolish the cycle of birth and death, proves that God's sustaining and regenerating creative power is ceaselessly at work in this his first divine and basic ordinance, namely, the family. From it the nations derive their physical life, and their existence literally depends on this ordinance of God. There are few such literal proofs of the validity of God's ordinances in the world as the fact that nations receive their death warrant at the precise moment when they begin to disregard this divine ordinance; transgressing the fourth and sixth commandments of the Decalogue (according to the Lutheran system of numbering) has always been one of the decisive factors in national decay, as can easily be proved.

Christian faith also sees in the other natural conditions of national existence an equally clear reference to the Creator. Not only the historical dwelling-place of a nation with its geographical and climatic character, but also the racial type and constitution of a people testify to the sovereignty of God the Creator " who has made me and all the world and still sustains me." The first duty of Christian thinking on the nature of nationality is to point to these facts and to show that the natural conditions of all

national life are the expression of God's creative power. It is not a matter of indifference for a nation whether it is aware that its very physical existence is a secret proof of the sovereignty of God.

Quite the most decisive sign of the connection linking national existence with God is provided by the *historical* fate of nations. The course of the history of nations testifies in a unique manner to the sovereignty of God — that is, his position as Lord of the world. And that is why it is precisely here that Christian faith comes into closest contact with the reality of nationality. Whenever Christian teaching places this point of contact in a clear and true light it makes an incomparable contribution to the understanding of nationality as compared with other theories of nationality. For the Christian testimony amounts to nothing less than the assertion that the " call " or " mission," in virtue of which a nation first gains real historical character and eminence, manifests God's dealings with that nation. The restrained apostolic language of the New Testament expresses this in Acts 17:26: " He hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation."

It must be clearly stated at the outset that this relation does not justify the naïve assumption that God's guidance can be claimed for any and every individual happening in the life of a nation. It would be a false and naïve interpretation of this scriptural and universally experienced Christian doctrine to suppose that any and every " great " event in the life of a nation can be directly referred to God. The idea expressed by this concept is rather that, inasmuch as God is the ruler of history, he is also ruler over the historical development of nations. This rule of God, that is, the fact that he is the ruler, can also express itself in history in secret ways. According to Lutheran

doctrine, God may manifest his sovereignty just as much in the abasement of a nation as in its historical rise, just as much when he calls a nation into historical being as when he banishes it from the stage of history.

According to Christian faith, the great fundamental secret of nationality, namely, its mission or " calling," cannot be really understood except on the basis of the Christian understanding of life.

The root importance of *klesis* or " calling " in the entire sociological philosophy of Christianity has already been mentioned. It is just as impossible for a Christian arbitrarily to change his nationality as it would be to alter at will the state appointed by God for each individual in his everyday life, such as being slave or freeman, man or woman. Our nationality has been given to us, just as much as our " call " to be man or woman, bond or free. However, there is yet another, deeper meaning contained in the idea of " calling," namely, that not only is each individual called to a special state, but that it is God himself from whom the call comes. The recognition of this fact is of decisive importance for the historical existence of a people.

We have referred above to the mystery that shrouds the historical birth of a nation, a mystery which transcends any merely rational explanation. Christian faith sees the explanation of this mystery in the fact that it is God, the Lord of History (as well as of our natural life), who calls a people. By the very fact of his calling he endows a nation with existence and a place in the world of nations. It is possible that theologically this is the only fundamental doctrine that can be laid down about nationality, namely, that a nation receives its mission from the hands of God. It owes its natural foundations, without which its existence as a people would be impossible, to the Creator; and

it owes its historical " call," without which its full historical existence would be impossible, to the Lord of History. This " call " lasts as long as God sees fit to allow. Therein lies an exact parallel to the Christian conception of man. According to the teaching of the Bible, an individual only attains complete humanity when called by God, who thereby adds to his merely creaturely existence mental and spiritual life. The eternally new creative activity of God transforms man from a member of the world of creatures to a member of the Kingdom of God (II Cor. 4:6). Precisely the same happens with nations. Full national existence only begins for a nation at that moment in time when God, by endowing it with a special historical mission, lifts it from prehistory into history. The existence, therefore, of every nation, consciously pursuing its historical calling and mission, is a testimony to the sovereign rule of God. The second great duty of Christian teaching consists, therefore, in testifying to this fact. This conviction is the axis on which rests the whole Christian view of nationality.

It must, of course, be immediately added that this view cannot be upheld in an exclusive or naïve spirit. Neither the birth of a nation through the creative will of God, nor the consciousness of its calling, can be used superficially as a means of self-glorification. The factual existence of a people can only be understood, in the light of Christian belief, by insisting on the fundamental distinction which the Reformation drew between *lex* and *evangelium*. This fundamental distinction means that the will of God only reaches us under this double and always interdependent aspect, namely, *both* as law and as gospel. It is one and the same action of God, only operating in a different manner; there is only one encounter between God and man, but the manner in which he deals with men varies. God's dealings with mankind under the law — his *opus alienum*

— occur in hidden ways through the mediation of his creatures and of the natural ordinances of this world; God's dealings with men under the gospel — his *opus proprium* — take place in the clear light of his revelation in Jesus Christ. According to the doctrine of the Reformers the one mode of activity cannot be preached without the other; the preaching of the law without the gospel leads to legalism; the preaching of the gospel without the law leads to false spiritualism.

Applied to nationality, this fundamental attitude of the Reformation means that nations also should always be considered under this double aspect. According to the law of God, a nation is a people in whom God's natural ordinances are at work; God's will expressed in law is shown by the clear and inviolable ordinances which govern the life of nations. But national life is also subject to " the law of sin and death " (Rom. 8:2) ; i.e., the burden of mortality — for nations may die — and the burden of guilt — for even great nations may become perverted and corrupt. Inasmuch as the lives of nations are subject to the law of God, man is led to recognize that the life of the nation is also subject to sin and change, and that it must seek the power of the forgiveness and resurrection of Christ.

But the preaching of the gospel in the life of a people implies that above the natural order, in which God's redemptive will is " hidden " under the law, the redemptive will of God is also ceaselessly at work gathering his own from among all nations and therefore in this particular nation also gathering his elect, for whom his ordinances have spiritual validity, who hold the faith in obedience to him and who are confirmed therein by his blessing.

The great importance of this doctrine of the law and the gospel in the life of a people is that it enables the

church and Christians to adopt an attitude to nationality that is in accordance with the facts of the case. It prevents Christian moralism which tries to impose the spiritual structure of the communities of early Christians directly and immediately on the everyday life of nations. "It is not a question of a Christian state and Christian civilization, but of a true state and a genuine civilization." [5]

This gives a definite answer to the question as to what the relationship between church and nation should actually be.

It is one of the peculiarities of the period of the Reformation, that the revival of the church was almost universally associated with a reawakening of national consciousness. This process is apparent in the whole of European history, but was especially marked in the history of the German Reformation. The sixteenth century, like the later Reformation period in other countries, is characterized by the fact that the mother tongue plays a leading part in the proclamation of the new gospel. The noblest instrument of national consciousness thereby became the vehicle for the encounter of church and people. This has happened again and again in the history of the mission field. Tribes which had hitherto only had a prehistoric or subhistorical existence often attained full national consciousness only when they received a translation of the Bible in their own language; and it has often happened that the creation of a Christian vocabulary of their own in catechism and hymnbook has coincided with the first blossoming of an autochthonous literature.

In spite of all this, the Lutheran Reformation has firmly and consistently maintained that the existence of the church is in no way bound up with any particular sociological or historical structure. The only essential

[5] Fr. Brunstädt, "*Gesetz und Evangelium*," in *Kirche, Volk und Staat*, (ed. Gerstermaier, Berlin, Furche-Verlag) p. 53.

foundation for the church is the presence of Jesus Christ in the Scripture and the sacraments. The nature of any particular nation is not therefore decisive for the existence of the church of Christ. By stating this principle Luther's Reformation maintained the integrity of the church. But the Reformation also expressed its conviction that the church would only reach its fullest practical development by becoming a national church. For the church does not attain its full development by assuming the character of an international universal organization, but only inasmuch as it preaches the gospel to the nations in their own language. The Word of God can only become truly effective when preached in a language "understanded of the people." By insisting on the rightful importance of a national church the true ecumenical nature of the church was at the same time safeguarded. For it was thereby made clear that the gospel of Jesus Christ must, in fact, be preached to every nation, and that the church's position as a national church was not of fundamental importance for the existence of the church itself. It receives its universality from Jesus Christ himself and from nothing else. The church therefore in its relations with the nation always does two things: it penetrates the nature of the people to the last fibers of its being in order to understand the national life from the point of view of God's ordinances and to preach the gospel of Christ in a manner suited to its genius; but at the same time it makes it clear that this its gospel is entirely independent of the nature of the nation in question, that it cannot receive its justification at the hands of the nation and is not called upon to justify itself to the nation. For the gospel is the gospel of the Lord, by whom and in whom all peoples live and receive their historical calling and in whom all peoples will find their salvation.

The question of the organized form of the church within

a nation is entirely independent of this. What sociological type of church should exist in any nation, whether an established church or a free church, is a matter of external historical tradition, which may well be of decisive importance for a country's history, but not for its church. If the church of Jesus Christ has once taken root in a country, it is as a rule a matter of life or death if this nation separates itself again from the church of Jesus Christ. But this would not in any way alter the mission of the church to that people. It must bear witness to the fact that the individual has received his membership of a nation in accordance with the will of God; that the nation must recognize that it has received its calling from God and that it must work out its destiny in obedience to God's ordinances; and that the church's function in the nation is to preach the law and the gospel whereon depends the salvation of the individual as well as the salvation of nations.

THE IDEA OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

by

MANFRED BJÖRKQUIST

THE IDEA OF A NATIONAL CHURCH

I

At the beginning of the present century a new movement arose within the Church of Sweden. The aim of this movement was to renew and deepen the essential nature of the character and calling of the Swedish national church. Its watchword, " The Swedish people — a people of God," expressed the essence of the idea of a national church, a conception which was treasured by the younger generation in the Swedish Church of that day as an ideal of great promise.

If this watchword is to be rightly understood, however, we must bear in mind that it was intended to express not merely an ideal or a vision of the future, but the deepest purpose of the Church of Sweden at the present time. This church was regarded as an incarnation of the idea of a national church. The whole history of the Swedish Church seemed to support this view. At the same time it was felt by the leaders of this movement that the idea of a national church constituted an ideal which could only be realized through much labor and struggle. In the midst of a historical process, with its constant changes, the church is continually involved in new situations and confronted by new demands. The effort to interpret these situations prophetically and to meet these demands compels her to a constant endeavor to realize her true nature, her inmost purpose. Therefore, as has frequently been suggested, the idea of the church will always be a " militant " idea. It

includes a constant challenge to the activity of the church. A militant national church blazes the trail for the true life of the nation, but an apathetic, inactive national church is simply a repellent caricature of a Christian church. A living, militant national church is always characterized by great tension, just because its vocation is so high, its task so great. The life of the whole nation, in all its variety and richness, is intimately connected with the life of the church. That is why a living national church must be ever seeking for the grace of God; it is constantly compelled to seek for divine forgiveness and divine strength.

What then is the deepest meaning of this idea of a national church? What right has a national church to call itself a Christian church?

It is not the character of its members but its distinctive message which makes a national church a Christian community. From the religious point of view the theological argument which supports the idea of a national church starts from the concept of prevenient and universal divine grace. The national church is the agent which proclaims the free, prevenient, and universal grace of God. But it is more than this: the national church itself — as a community — is, by its very existence, a gospel. All over Sweden the white churches stand out in the countryside as a testimony to the Christian gospel. Man comes into touch with the church at all the great moments of human life. From the cradle to the grave the national church overarches the struggles and vicissitudes of human life with the celestial rainbow of divine grace.

The very existence of the church constitutes a proclamation of *prevenient* grace. It witnesses to the truth that God seeks man before man begins to seek God: God is first at the trysting place. The national church proclaims this truth first and foremost by the rite of baptism, which

is the sacrament par excellence for this kind of church. As one of our own writers puts it:

> The one thing we know about every person in our country — and, strictly speaking, this is the only thing we know — is this: that he too is included in the grace of God, that divine grace does not wait for him to take the initiative, but that the first step is always taken by God himself. It is our desire, therefore, that the moment anyone begins to think about God, the moment his first faint longing for God has been awakened, he should be able to see and know that God thought about him long ago, that God has been longing for him all the time, and that his own desire for God is due to the fact that God is seeking him. This is why we christen our children.[1]

The fact that the national church exists also constitutes the proclamation of *universal* grace. In principle the national church includes the whole nation. A man may deliberately withdraw from the external communion of the national church, but the national church — like a spiritual mother — can never cease to feel responsible for those who have left the outward community. The national church is and remains the spiritual home of the nation, and just as no one can really cut himself off from the love and the prayer and the responsibility of his own family, so no one can ever really sever his connection with the church in its love and care and sense of responsibility for all its children. The national church is a living and perpetual messenger, proclaiming, in intention at least, the divine call to everyone within the borders of the country. The national church asserts — by its very existence — that every man and woman born into the nation is invited to enter the Kingdom of God. In this age, which is known as the "day of grace," the gates of the Kingdom of God are open to all. Hence the national church includes all within its borders, the criminal in prison as well as the

[1] E. Billing.

good churchman who, in all sincerity, is faithful to his religious profession. Every single human being is absolutely dependent upon the grace of God; no one to whom it is offered ever deserves it in the least; it is entirely unmerited. This grace ought to be offered to every human being; the responsibility for making this possible rests upon the national church. Thus the national church itself constitutes a protest against the idea that Christianity is only intended to meet the spiritual needs of certain kinds of people. Divine sonship does not depend upon the possession of a certain kind of religious disposition which would make "piety" a special characteristic of people of a certain type. No, a national church proclaims that it is normal to live in communion with God. To live apart from God is abnormal, it is not quite "human." This truth is urgently needed in these days when secularism is widespread and in so many quarters Christian life is barely tolerated as a quasi-private affair connected with certain groups, whose numbers — so it is said — are steadily declining. The national church maintains that God is *not* the private deity of certain groups. He is the creator of heaven and earth, the cause and the origin of all things, the Father of all souls. In him alone can the human heart find rest.

Finally, the national church is an expression of the *free* grace of God. Although it is connected with the state it must not use the power of the state to win that which can only be gained by the grace with which it has been entrusted. In this respect national churches have gradually freed themselves from dependence on those elements of authority which were formerly at their disposal simply because they were national churches; these elements, indeed, were relics of a time when it was in the interest of the state that religious conformity should prevail. Although the right of free secession from the Swedish Church has

not yet been settled in a satisfactory way, the church itself, through its episcopate and its church assembly, has adopted this genuinely *religious* idea of a national church.

II

The message of the national church is primarily addressed to individuals. The gospel is a message to them. It is as individuals that men and women enter the Kingdom of God. But at the present time we have gained a new and deeper insight into the reality of community. We have come to see that the individual cannot detach himself from various social relationships. It is true, of course, that God does communicate directly with the human soul, but any view of history and of man which takes all the factors of life into account will naturally include consideration of all those relations which are so essential to personality. The church, for instance, has never been able to ignore either family or national relationships. The national church would indeed be the last to succumb to a superficial individualism.

The presentation of the gospel to the individual, in such a way that it challenges him to decision, must of course be the first duty of a national church. Preaching of this kind, with its definite appeal to the individual soul, has not always been characteristic of the national church. But this duty should never be divorced from the church's task of improving the social conditions under which people live. So far as the national Church of Sweden has been alive to its task it has always been interested in education — in the education of the individual as well as in the system of popular education. Here the point is that the church should try to create an atmosphere or a spiritual climate in which it is easier and more natural to present the gospel to individuals.

The Church of Sweden has always been greatly interested in schools and in the educational system as a whole. In front of the ancient university of Upsala there stands the statue of Archbishop Jacob Ulfsson, the founder of the university. In front of the oldest college building in Västeras stands the statue of Bishop Johannes Rudbeckius, to whom Sweden owes her first grammar school, and in many an elementary school in Sweden the portrait of a former rector of the parish might be hung in a place of honor as the founder of the school. This interest in schools was, of course, first evoked by the desire to give a good religious education, but it has extended to the educational system as a whole. The fact that the Church of Sweden — through special organs created for the purpose — is now cooperating in the valuable voluntary educational work which has been such a feature of modern Swedish life, is in full accordance with the best traditions of the Swedish Church.

The interest of the national church, however, is not confined to the educational system. Like a good spiritual mother the church must pay great attention to the whole process by which a nation attains maturity and creates its own future. The form this feature will take can never be a matter of indifference to the church, for the church will itself take part in it and will bear a heavy share of responsibility for it.

The influence of the church, in this respect, will be extended primarily by its own living members who are at work within various spheres of social life. The national church must realize the Lutheran idea of "the calling," which regards all life and work as service offered to God in response to his call. The legislator, the social worker, the artist, and author, the journalist, the employer, the workman, should all feel that they are called to serve God

in their daily work. They cannot, it is true, reform the abuses connected with any process of work, but they can perform the work itself in a new spirit, and they can give it a new meaning; they may be able to inculcate Christian ideals in such a way that they will influence men's attitude to the work in question and their estimate of its value. To some extent at least every sphere of work can be freed from that onesided and exaggerated view of its importance which so frequently happens in this age of specialization. For a sphere of activity may quite well be selfish; on the other hand it may form part of and help to serve a larger unity. For although the church cannot draw up a social program from the Christian point of view, valid for all periods in history, it can preach the gospel in such a way that all who work for the community in any way will be able to maintain the Christian idea of love and the Christian demand for righteousness as a living reality; in so doing the church will be the secret leaven within all social activity and will also indicate the ultimate end toward which all man's energies should be directed. Thus the type of life represented by a national church — for such a type does exist — is anxious to subject life as a whole to the guidance of the Spirit of the Word. All the conflicts of human existence are felt within its heart. Nothing that legitimately belongs to human life can ever be left outside.

III

Above all, the national church must act nobly and firmly; in her spiritual campaign she must be ever ready to take the initiative. Just as Christ perceived latent capacities for God and for goodness within human beings, where others could scarcely detect any sign of good at all — as for example in the woman of Samaria — so should the church contemplate humanity with the keen eye of a

watchful mother, ready to perceive possible openings for the gospel. The young professor, Nathan Söderblom, once remarked to a group of ordinands, " As servants of Christ, you have an ally in every man." The national church must never lose sight of the fact that in the course of the centuries the gospel of Christ has stamped its imprint upon the national life — upon its laws, its customs, its general outlook — far beyond the borders of the church itself. Our Christian heritage is larger than we suppose. What attitude, for instance, should the church adopt toward a great national movement? Should it be primarily critical? No; first of all the church, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, must try to discover the truth which constitutes the vital principle of the movement; having done this, it must then support this truth. It must act pastorally on a large scale by compelling a movement of this kind to face and realize its own truth, to be conscious of its deepest and ultimate purpose. This is a noble spiritual campaign. In this way the church will be the spiritually unifying force within the nation. The church will thus help to set movements free from corporate selfishness and to educate them for the service of the community. It is only from a positive point of view of this kind that the church, when it is asked, can pronounce a fitting judgment. For in all the judgments passed by the church there must be something of the spirit of the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost sheep with sorrow and love in his heart. The church must wage a redeeming and victorious warfare. It must not first of all take defensive action; it must launch an offensive against evil in all forms, and it must fight for the realization of the divine purpose within the nation.

The church must fight nobly, not only in support of movements within the life of the nation, but for the nation itself. " May God bring peace to the soul of Sweden." [2]

[2] J. A. Eklund.

Here we enter a sphere which is full of danger, where the "narrow way" which "leadeth unto life" skirts dangerous bypaths. But the national church cannot be indifferent to the historical calling of the nation. In its corporate capacity possibly it has no prophetic mission to guide the nation. The Lord of History will raise up prophets in his own good time. But the national church has a task to fulfill in this sphere; it should so foster the spiritual life of this particular people and so proclaim the truth of the gospel within the life of the nation, that the people may be helped to distinguish the false prophets and leaders from the true, and may be able to discern its true vocation. Above all, the church must do its utmost to prevent the nation from indulging in self-glorification and even in national idolatry, a consummation which is reached when a nation regards its own welfare, its own glory and power as its supreme right, its supreme purpose and its supreme good. As the national church takes an earnest and responsible part in national life it becomes its duty and its right to use its powers wisely in the education of the nation for the cause of world-wide brotherhood. Education of this kind is the principal contribution the church can make to the cause of world peace. "The nations are archangels, created to execute the commands of God, every tribe and every people in accordance with its gifts and its calling." [3]

It is evident that in order to fulfill its task as an educator of the people, the national church must remain above party conflict. It must not be a class church, nor be engaged in the political struggle for power. By an impartial attitude only can it keep the way open for its message in every direction.

It is also obvious that the far-reaching and immense task of the church demands all the activity which church people can mobilize. In this respect the cooperation of lay-

[3] F. N. Söderblom.

men is needed everywhere. The national church must not be merely a church of ecclesiastics. Besides the work which is regulated by law, there is great need for voluntary effort. In a rather fortunate way the Swedish Church has been able to combine the legally established and the voluntary aspects of church life. Besides a church assembly, in the course of the last half century, and convocations of clergy, chapters, episcopates (all established by law), the church has created several organs for the direction of its voluntary work. Thus the church assembly appoints central boards of missions, foreign and home missions, and a committee for the missions to seamen. Diocesan conventions, not established by law, are held in the dioceses, which appoint diocesan councils for the direction of voluntary work, etc. Recently the various chapters have been reorganized, and in addition to the duties they have discharged hitherto, they have been entrusted with the task "of promoting Christian service to the poor, and youth work in the diocese." If possible, this is to be carried out in cooperation with voluntary organizations. Here we see the close connection between the activities established by law and voluntary effort.

The Swedish national church is closely connected with the state. Such a relation can, of course, offer valuable possibilities for reaching the whole nation with the message of the church. So long as the church is allowed all necessary freedom, the importance of this connection with the state must not be underestimated. But in principle the national church does not need to be a state church. It may be conceived that this cooperation may be bought at too high a price. At this time, when the power of the state is increasing, the church must follow this development with extreme vigilance, and must maintain its claim for necessary independence.

The idea of the church which has here been set forth is not easy to realize in this age of secularization. There is always the danger that a national church with ancient traditions and an outward stable and unified position may easily forget that it must also be a missionary church. It has indeed a sphere of missionary effort within its own borders. It has the extremely difficult twofold vocation to be both a national church and a missionary church.

If Christianity itself is a daring phenomenon within the world, Christianity in the form of a national church is still more audacious. But is it not a fact that as things are, a daring faith alone has any hope of success? In Sweden many churchmen are asking themselves: Can we really speak of the present situation in terms of a "choice"? Must not our campaign envisage the nation as a whole if victory is ever to be achieved?

When we think of the history of the national Church of Sweden a phrase from the Scriptures springs into new life: "The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance."

NATION AND CHURCH IN THE ORTHODOX LANDS OF EASTERN EUROPE

by

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1. INTRODUCTION

THE nations in the Orthodox East have arisen, historically, in the closest connection with the Orthodox Church. However, no generally acknowledged (ecumenically instituted) and specific teaching exists in this church which defines either the relation between church and nation, or what the nation is.

In the Orthodox East this problem has come to the fore only in the most recent times. From the beginning down to the present moment, the development of the problem has run along much the same lines as in the West. In the East, however, we may note some important peculiarities. The Christian West pays greater attention to " the world " (to history, culture, community life, to the practical tasks of Christianity in social life) than the Christian East. The latter is far more concerned with the " beyond," with the " mystical " element. From this standpoint, in close connection with the spirit of early Christianity, strong ascetic (in the sense of renunciation of the world and its sin) and eschatological tendencies naturally follow. These again give rise to a certain secularization, a dualism with Christian social life, a mere renunciation " of the world."

Since the problem of the " nation " is part of the general problem of the " world " (history, culture, social life), we can here trace similar tendencies. As will be shown later on, it certainly does not follow that the Orthodox Church has taken a purely negative attitude toward this problem

of the nation. In the Byzantine-medieval period, the development proceeded in such a way that the existing national tendencies of the Orthodox peoples (which then bore a more political character) were left to be fashioned principally by the states. After the invasion of the Mohammedan Turks (and also the Tartars) a new situation emerged: the church and the (Christian) nation drew closer to one another, and to some extent even became fused with one another, for mutual protection against Islam. This situation was inevitable because these nations were now under the political control of Islam which everywhere threatened both Christianity (church) and the (Christian) nation, and actually issued in the extermination of a great part of Orthodox Christianity and of great numbers of the Orthodox peoples of Africa and Asia Minor, as well as in eastern Europe.

This close and vital connection between the church and the Christian nations led not only to the deliverance of Christian peoples of eastern Europe in a national-political sense, but also to the cultivation of national cultures and the awakening and application of the principle of fellowship (*sobornost*) inside the church itself. This was not, however, the same Christian-ecclesiastical nationalism that we see today, which appeared only in the nineteenth century in connection with the development in the West. The connection was basically twofold. First, liberation from Islamic-Turkish subjection and the resultant national unity and independence permanently strengthened national consciousness amongst the Orthodox peoples of southeastern Europe. Leading ecclesiastics and clergy shared in furthering this process. Second, and more important, in the twentieth century the modern, secular nationalism of the West, with all its positive and negative elements, penetrated into the life of the liberated Orthodox

Christian nations. Then for the first time the Orthodox Church saw the problem of the nation in its real depth, breadth, and significance; it saw the division between church and nation (national state) which here and there revealed itself; it realized the necessity of seeking a true Christian solution of the problem of the relations between church and nation.

However, this awareness can hardly be said to be universal. It must be admitted that for very many today in the Orthodox East our problem, as a church problem, either simply does not exist or is regarded as already solved.

The few theologians and clergy in the Orthodox East who are occupied with the problem of the church and the nation endeavor to give some sort of answer to the question. Their answers represent only personal views. Unfortunately, and frequently without substantiation, such views are stated as the "official" views of the Orthodox Church. This causes still more confusion among Orthodox Christians, in addition to the lack of clarity and the difficulty in understanding this question which in any case already exists.

Thus, in dealing with this problem for the purpose of this discussion, we must turn to the history of the Orthodox East, to the Holy Scriptures, and to many of our Eastern traditions.

2. HISTORICAL SURVEY

Although it is almost generally agreed that from ancient times up to the present day the national idea hardly existed, and that such a conscious, intensive nationalism as that of today was unknown, nonetheless a national feeling was alive then among the peoples, at least in the love of home (land and people). This expressed itself externally in diverse ways. The Romans, for instance, preserved the

national customs of other peoples incorporated in the empire. The works of many poets, though the Romans felt themselves lords of the Roman Empire, attest the fact that they loved their own narrower home.

The Jews offer another case in point. Although for the Jews the religious and the national fused completely, their peculiar customs manifested themselves so strongly that they constituted a danger to the expansion, unity, and catholicity of early Christianity. The keeping of the law as national custom, the rise of Judaizing sects, the Jewish attitude which regarded the apostle Paul as a traitor, kept many Jews from Christianity.

In ancient times, as in our own day, cultural type provided the chief marks of national difference. In the historic development, adaptation and unfolding of Christianity we are able to trace down to the present time the continuous interactions of these differences. Three are paramount.

The Greeks (or the Hellenists), through their language and especially through their rational, speculative, theoretical, philosophic, and artistic endowment, through stern, logical schooling, and through their conceptions and forms of expression, shaped the Christian verities, those trinitarian, christological, soteriological, and mariological dogmas which pressed to the fore. They also formulated and insured the missionary task of the church. This Eastern Church system prevailed throughout the Roman Empire down to the fifth century, allowing the Greek language and Hellenistic (or Eurasian) culture to enter with their richness into the service of the church.

The Syrian-Arabic culture with its artistic values and especially its passion-mysticism also attached itself to the church. This culture influenced not only Byzantine but also Christian peoples as far west as Germany and the Netherlands.

The Roman-Latin spirit came to the fore in the judicial and practical formation of ecclesiastical life. This spirit excelled in building up the law of the common life and the art of administration. It had a sense for external authority and subordination, along with a realistic and practical instinct in handling life which provided a basis for moral discipline and the shepherding of souls. The names of Tertullian, Cyprian, Fortunatus, Felixissimus, Novatian, come to mind in connection with the early beginnings in north Africa of this external ordering and unity, organization and discipline of the church.

In the adaptation and the growth of Christianity in the first centuries these types of culture, each with distinctive features not yet overcome by Christianity, represented the beginnings of certain influences on the form of the church which foreshadowed the disharmony between the Christian East and West. Among the Greeks (and the Eurasians) such influences led to the exaggerated speculation which renounced the world in asceticism and contemplation, and prevented the comprehension of the meaning and significance of the papal idea and of the claim to an external monarchical authority in the church vested in the person of the pope. Among the Latins they made it difficult to appreciate the depth of dogmatic problems, and especially the sophistic, juridical formulation of the questions of faith. It meant the incursion of a formal mechanical legalism, and the Roman autocratic spirit into ecclesiastical organization, and also the tendency to conformity to worldly authority. It meant also the survival (in the Roman-Byzantine conception) of the *pontifex maximus* idea in the emperor.

Moreover, at that time, misunderstandings and confusion arose between outstanding Greek and Latin theologians. On the Greek side, Gregory the Theologian and Athanasius the Great are to be specially mentioned. These

differences went so deep that in the Pelagian conflicts Augustine exclaimed: "*Quid ergo faciemus, cum illi Graeci sint, nos veri Latini?*" ("What shall we do then when they are Greek and we are Latins?") The conflicts became more serious when questions arose concerning the affairs of administration and the autocratic claims of the popes.

But we also observe within Eastern Christianity itself the same effects of national differences working against right belief and unity in the church. This was true especially in the rise and development of Nestorianism and Eutychianism. Here the misunderstandings and national-political differences among the Byzantine, Syrian, Armenian, and Coptic peoples played a part. National peculiarities are reflected still more strongly in Syrian, Egyptian, Greek-Byzantine, and Armenian forms of liturgical usages and prayers. We may mention for example the liturgies of James, of Mark, and of Chrysostom; the use of the different Oriental languages in worship and preaching; the translation of Holy Scripture and many other Christian documents into these languages; the cult usages, festivals, and fasts; even the emergence of schools of different spiritual orientation — in Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome. A similar development occurred in the West: diversity of liturgy persisted down to the time when the Roman papal liturgy triumphed through the sacramentary introduced by Charles the Great, but later, however, many liturgical diversities remained in the West, especially in the Frank-Gallic regions.

For the purpose of this study certain points in the historical development of Christianity merit special consideration.

In the East we must note the rise and self-assertion of the so-called national churches. Here, of course, closely bound

with the national element, the political element also played a part. Among these churches were the following:

The Georgian (Russian) Church, which existed as a national-orthodox unity as early as the seventh century, and as an autocephalous body as early as the eleventh century.

The Bulgarian Church, already existent in the ninth century, and autocephalous by the tenth century.

The Russian Church similarly, especially after the Florentine union and after the fall of Constantinople. In this connection we note the ascent of Moscow as the third Rome, and its relation to national-orthodox messianic ideas.

The Serbian Church, existent in the thirteenth century and autocephalous in the fourteenth century.

The Rumanian Church, existent as an autonomous, national-ecclesiastical unity by the thirteenth century.

The national Orthodox churches in the Ukraine, in Poland, in Finland, in Esthonia, in Latvia, in Lithuania, and in Albania, all of which have arisen since the World War.

Along with the churches we note also three patriarchates.

The Patriarchate of Antioch, which arose as a national-Arabic Orthodox Church in the second half of the nineteenth century, finally winning the struggle with the ecclesiastical Greek minority, dominant until then.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which, from the middle of the nineteenth century, witnessed a struggle between the Arabian Orthodox majority and the small and dwindling Greek section which held the church power in their hands.

The Patriarchate of Alexandria in which the Arabian Orthodox minority had a similar experience.

Further, since the World War the leadership of the Orthodox churches in Rumania, Greece, and Jugoslavia has

been so strongly influenced not only by national but also by nationalistic trains of thought that the vital national-Orthodox minorities in these churches (chiefly Orthodox Bulgarians, Russians, Ukranians, and Albanians) have lost their national-ecclesiastical rights — the cultus, language, and national ministry — either completely or to a very large extent.

In the West we must note a parallel development. It is surprising to observe that while nearly all Latin nations are Roman Catholics, nearly all Anglo-Saxon nations are Protestant, just as nearly all Greco-Slavs are Orthodox. It is often affirmed by historians that the conversion of Anglo-Saxon England to Christianity and the formation of a Christian community in England has helped the creation of a national unity. Even today the Anglican Church (not only in England) is a national church, just as the Presbyterian Church in Scotland may also be regarded as a national church.

In western and northern Europe the Reformation led not only to new political formations, but also to special national churches.

The Unitarian and Hussite churches became national churches in Czechoslovakia.

Lutheranism in the Scandinavian countries, in no way influenced by its national origin, took on a different character from that in Germany.

In Germany itself, the national peculiarity continues to be in evidence, not only in the movement of the so-called German Christians.

What does this review of history down to our own times [1] say to us? In the first place, everywhere in the Orthodox East, nationality (*Volkstum*), or the element of " the na-

[1] A fuller account can be found in the present author's *Nation, Staat, Welt und Kirche im Orthodoxen Osten* (Sofia, 1937).

tional," was always present, and played a definite and, indeed, a very important role in the history of Christianity and the church.

Second, two fundamental facts appear: on the one hand the element of the national gave an impetus, a diversity, and an enrichment to the adaptation and development of Christianity. It proved itself often to be a gift which was also a problem which, when faced, produced great positive achievements for Christianity and the church. On the other hand, however, the national element impeded the pure, unifying development, and indeed the greater extension of Christianity and of the church. This connection of the national element with Christianity related itself to the external organization as well as to the spiritual orientation of Christians.

When this is the case, Christians and the church have before them a historical phenomenon of the greatest significance. This they cannot face passively simply because the nation itself is never passive, but rather a very active element in Christianity and in the church. In the present period this has become increasingly obvious. The nation now appears among almost all peoples in the powerful form of a conscious, supreme, aggressive nationalism, which threatens Christianity and all Christian peoples from many sides.

Since the national element, the nation as a sociological and spiritual reality, appears as an active principle in the whole of history, like the institutions of the family and the state, it constitutes an important area of life. To it the church must take up an attitude, and in it the church must fulfill its task. The church cannot and may not be content to say that the nation (the people, the national element) is something foreign, outside the sphere of its activity. Neither may it say that the "world" (history,

culture, the family, the state, community life) stands outside its interest and the circle of its tasks.

All this is especially true for the various branches of the church of the Orthodox East inasmuch as for them the nation has always played a greater and more important role than it has anywhere else. For them, also, in their spiritual and constructive tasks, the national problem in modern times has shown itself to be one of the most important, full of possibilities, but not less full of dangers, for their work.

It was indicated at the outset of this study that in the Orthodox Church no generally acknowledged (ecumenically instituted), definite teaching exists to define the relation between the church and the nation. On the other hand, we must point out that in recent literature it is affirmed by many that such a teaching is given in the decision of the Patriarchate of Constantinople at the Church Council of 1872 — the decision given against so-called phyletism. This affirmation is either plainly false or is based on a misunderstanding.[2] In the substantiation of this decision the following points are generally affirmed:

The Christian church as a spiritual fellowship is composed of all peoples in brotherly unity in Christ. It is something unknown in the Christian church that in one and the same place different ecclesiastical jurisdictions separated according to nationalities should exist. All local churches of a town and an area include all believers without difference of nationality. That was the case at the beginning in Jerusalem, in spite of the conflicts which arose there

[2] This opens up a discussion of the Greco-Bulgarian national-ecclesiastical conflict. The point at issue is the circumstances under which the various members participated in this council and its decisions. Further details can be found in my book mentioned above, and especially in an earlier work: *Die Verfassung der bulgarischen orthodoxen Kirche* (Zürich, 1918, Verl. Gebr. Leeman).

between Jewish and Greek Christians. Therefore, all churches have geographical and not national frontiers, even the churches of Tirnovo and of Ochrida, etc.

This is also the sense of the canons of the Orthodox Church. The opposite position would overturn ecclesiastical organization and the moral and judicial unity of the church. For this reason all canons are against it. With national divisions and divided jurisdiction of the church that condition of affairs would come into being which St. Paul condemned (1 Cor. 1:12) as a condition of confusion and chaos. Then, too, national egotism would be furthered in a so-called national church and gain such ascendancy over religious feelings that it would be very difficult to work for the fulfilment of Christian duty across national lines, and it would also most likely lead to national self-seeking. In the hearts of Christian people, national feelings and worldly advantages would have the greater influence, a condition which would hinder religious fellowship with Christians of other nations in the mystical participation in everything sacred. It would be improbable that the national churches would have religious fellowship in the spirit of mutual love and integrity, that their pastors would meet in local and ecumenical synods to work for the general spiritual good of Christians and people in general and for the good ordering of the whole church. It would be unlikely that the pastors would concern themselves for the general well-being and strive for the honor of God, of the Orthodox faith, and of the Catholic Orthodox Church of God. In all these instances things holy and divine would be changed into things human, and worldly advantage would be placed above spiritual and religious concerns.

Granting the national principle, it was assumed that each national church would seek its own advantage. Under these conditions the dogmatic affirmation, which stands

in its radiant greatness in the confession of faith, the affirmation of "the one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church," would be overthrown. Thus, to the council, phyletism appeared as a struggle against Christian teaching itself and against the Spirit of the Holy Gospel. For this reason the Christian church would never set up and place in power such an anti-canonical concept as phyletism.

With these affirmations the council passed judgment upon phyletism in general as well as on the Bulgarians in particular. In addition, in the instruments of the council and still more concretely in the different writings of the patriarchs, specific antiphyletistic pronouncements are made, implying that the Bulgarians had demanded a (national) church without boundaries; that is, that the jurisdiction of their national church should be extended everywhere that believers of a definite (their) nation lived. This demand attributed to the Bulgarians of the Bulgarian Church is a pure fabrication, for the authorized leaders of the church and the overwhelming majority of the Orthodox Bulgarians have always and everywhere sought and demanded only a church with definite territorial boundaries. The royal firman (decree) about the founding of the Bulgarian Exarchate (Art. X), as well as the statutes of the Bulgarian Exarchate formed in 1871, speak only of a Bulgarian Church with definite, strictly delineated dioceses. Alongside this judgment of the situation according to principle, the council issued the following decision:

1. We judge, condemn and declare phyletism, that is, division according to racial origin (*tas phyletikas diakroseis*), bias against a people (*tas ethnikas ereis*), emulation arising from incongruity (*zalous*), and conflicts (*dichostasias*) in the church of Christ as something which contradicts the evangelical teaching and the canons of the holy fathers.

2. Those who accept national differences of this nature and on them try to establish new phyletistic efforts, we declare, ac-

cording to the canons, to be excluded from the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church: that is, recreant (schismatic). In consequence, we declare as recreant those who have separated themselves from the Orthodox Church, and have set up special altars, and have undertaken phyletistic efforts, and those who were consecrated by them as bishops, priests, and deacons, and all who have cooperated with them and are of like feeling, their co-workers and those who have accepted their holy (cult) institutions and their blessing as true and right — both clerics and laity.

If we analyze the implications of this decision, we come to the following conclusions:

In the first place, the decision, and the conception contained within it, is a local, ecclesiastical (consequently not ecumenical-orthodox) decision and conception, since the council which issued it was a local council of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Second, judged on its own merits, this decision gives no comprehensive answer to our basic question concerning the relation between the nation and the church. That which the decision does express is at most a warning against the dangers inherent in an exaggerated nationalism in the church (national strife in the church). The decision does not tell us anything positive about the framing of the relation of the church to the nation, an important area of the church's task and influence. Consequently it helps us very little, if at all, in the solution of the problem of nation and church.

Third, the decision also contains pronouncements which must at least be regarded as questionable, because they are unsubstantiated. One such is the assertion which, with regard to the church, rejects national distinction as irrelevant to the adaptation and external development of Christianity.

Fourth, because of this rejection the decision is unable

to provide determinative direction for the subsequent development of the problem of nation and church in the Orthodox East.

When we see how important a part the nation has played in Christian history, and since the problem of nation and church has itself become one of the most burning problems of the church at the present time, one of the most important tasks of theology and the church must be to throw light on the question as to what actually the nation is, and what should be the relation between the nation and the church. With regard to the national differences in the church, Irenaeus said that if only doctrines were uniform and love were in control, differences were irrelevant or must be endured.

In this situation, can the right balance be achieved? What directing principles may we deduce here on the ground of Holy Scripture? What can we learn from the best traditions of the church and from the long experience of the church in the centuries of its history?

3. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

What is to be understood by the word "nation"? In spite of the earnest efforts of the best informed, the concepts of people (*Volk*), nation, nationality, have not been unequivocally explained. It has become somewhat clearer how, since the end of the eighth century, nationality — nation in its most recent form — has arisen out of emotional love for home, land, and people, and out of its more political-cultural basis in the past. By such nationality we mean conscious cultivation of the national language, the creation of a national army, the democratic principles of the French Revolution: government by the people, the declaration of the right of self-determination, the enhancing of the social element of the community life, romanti-

cism, the national-political movements for freedom. Nevertheless all that cannot exhaustively explain how what we now know as a nation arises or has arisen nor indeed what the nation actually is. When by nation we mean not merely the population of a land or the members of a state, but that spiritual collective body which in the past, present, and future feels itself to be a unity, is conscious of itself and emerges as a whole — in other words, that which the Germans today understand as *Volkstum* — then it is not only difficult but almost impossible to apply an objective criterion to the concept " nation," or to try to find a criterion through some fixed combination of several of its inherent elements.

The physiological or biological, the race or blood relationship in a nation is an element that either does not exist in real completeness (unity of origin of the human race) or it is something hypothetical and, in any case, secondary. Today it is established that " pure " nations in this sense nowhere obtain, and the higher a nation is spiritually, the more completely is it mixed. The blood relationship in a nation is rather to be understood as an expansion of the family or the kin, but even in this sense it is something very hypothetical.

The natural combination of territory and climate is also a very indefinite factor in a nation. On the same territory, or in a like climate, many nations often live. On the other hand the different parts of a single nation may live in different circumstances in regard to territory and climate. The streams divide, but they also unite. Present-day means of communication have further diminished the significance of this factor for the development of a nation.

These two, physiology and geography, are physical elements of the entity nation. All remaining ones are of a spiritual character.

First of these is language. This we regard as a basic factor, as the sharpest expression of nationality in primitive as well as in highly developed nations. It appears as the artist of the people, as the mediator of their exchanges, and as the highest bond of national fellowship, as well as the most sacred value of each nation. Nevertheless, language is neither the sole nor the decisive mark of nationality. For example, there are several nations which speak the same language, such as the English and the English-speaking North Americans, the Spaniards and the Spanish-speaking South Americans, the Portuguese and the Brazilians. There are also those who regard themselves as a political and even a national unity but have within themselves groups of people speaking different languages: for example, the Basques in Spain, the Bretons in France, the Welsh in Great Britain. Further, inside a nation having one written language, we also find many dialects which are different to the point of being unintelligible to one another, as, for example, many of the German and Russian dialects. There are, in addition, other nations such as the Jews who have lost their own tongue, but who nevertheless remain through the millenniums decidedly a nation. In any case a language, inasmuch as it appears as an essential element of nationality, is an expression of the soul and is thus a spiritual element, especially in connection with the literature of a nation.

In the second place, many regard religion (or the confession) as a sign of nationality, a sign which would be true in part of antiquity. After Jesus Christ, this was radically altered and now one can scarcely speak of a *national* religion in the fundamental sense of this word. Many different nations belong to the same religion or confession, and individual nations belong to different religions or confessions. On the other hand, we may observe that the na-

tional character has always somehow imparted its peculiar characteristics to the adaptation or the development of the church as the outward form of the Christian religion.[3]

Further, we must mention here usages, customs, tradition, the so-called national culture (art, education, local customs), and in particular common experiences and memories, common destiny (suffering, honor, history, social solidarity, common strivings or common will) — all being in the nature of a common consciousness, a self-determination, a self-affirmation, a self-recollection. There is also the knowledge of interpretation of a common special task, faith in a common aim and a common mission in history, both essential and significant for the nation as such. But all this is precisely a complex of great spiritual entities or values of the national unity from the past, in the present, and for the future. Here real and irrational elements meet and intertwine inextricably in the forming of a nation and its character.

Finally, many count the political-state unity the essential characteristic of a nation: the state for protection, discipline, culture; the nation as a growing organism, with the state as the framework, the organization of a nation. However, the state is hardly a necessary element of a nation, since not all nations are united as states, and several nations or parts of nations can live in one state.

In this survey of various approaches to the concept "nation," we wish to make clear why it is not possible exhaustively to explain the nation by analysis or logic, either through the different elements which are attributed to it or through any combination of those elements. There always remains something in it which cannot be understood on rational grounds, and which must be designated by such words as metaphysical, irrational, and transcendent.

[3] Compare on this point the facts in the historical survey given above.

That does not mean something wholly "unconscious" or "instinctive"; still less does it mean any abstract synthesis of empirical facts, as do the phenomenological, nominalistic or positivistic or, further, the liberalistic or socialistic explanations of the nation with which we are now familiar. The nation is above all a great spiritual entity. It is the spirit of a nation which makes the nation, a spirit which stretches indeed beyond the empirical and stands in essential connection with the irrational and transcendent. It is something both mystical and real. It arises from intuitive events, out of mystical experiences in a higher world (the transcendental). Therefore, the nation is, beneath all its manifestations, in its deepest being, always a definite and great reality, perceptible in the world and in life. For this reason, organically, it has of necessity grown up with a moral ordering, with an ideal of a higher nature, with faith in a historical task and with religion. In a certain sense the nation is an idea of God; a call of God which then becomes a vocation; a gift of God which then becomes the task of a people as well.

This suggests the second fundamental principle to be derived from a survey of the history of peoples: namely, the faith of a nation in a vocation and in a mission, in a task to be fulfilled in history, is neither fabricated nor fortuitous. By whom is a nation called? By whom sent? Whose missionary is it to be? By whom is the task set? These questions are always questions of faith, questions which have meaning and power only when they are discerned as something from on high, from God himself, from God, the Lord of History, who calls the nations, places tasks upon them, endows them with special gifts for these tasks, and sends them out to the fulfilment of the tasks. If this is so, a responsibility is laid upon all nations to see whether and how the call is accepted, how gifts for the spe-

cific tasks are employed, how the mission is being fulfilled — a responsibility which is also connected with the judgment and punishment of God upon all nations.

We have characterized the nation as an entity which is both mystical and real, one, therefore, which is twosided and with a twofold meaning. As a creaturely reality it is something conditioned and transitory, liable to sin and subject to corruption — a fact which will be dealt with later. On the other hand, through its mystical or transcendental element, through the entry of the spirit of God into its life, through the harmonious connection of the divine-human in its nature, the nation acquires its actual meaning and value, its consecration, its inspiration and dynamic.

In this connection we observe in the history of nations the positive contributions of peoples, just as earlier we traced the part played by the Greeks in the history of Christianity. In more recent times among Orthodox peoples, the Russians in particular have been under the influence of the messianic idea. Indeed, Russian messianism is a religious-Christian messianism. Men such as Dostoievski, V. Soloviev, Chomiakov, have shared and preached this faith in the universal Christian mission of the Russian people, but it actually goes back to the Middle Ages, that is, to the idea of Moscow as the third Rome. In the course of the centuries the message has changed its content considerably. On the one hand it has been conditioned by Old Testament tendencies; for example, from the Josephites, on through Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great down to the present-day Russian communists. On the other hand, it has been guided by a genuine New Testament spirit: impulses to freedom, love, and sacrifice. This appeared first in the spiritual outlook of Nil Sorski and continued on through many groups of sectaries down to the most recent

days of the Russian Starzen — the famous monistic fathers of the present-day confessor-martyrs. Of course, much is contained in these movements which is false and unhealthy, but there is also great strength: passionate devotion to Christ, together with outstanding instances of courage of conviction and martyrdom.

Over against the juridical-temporal and absolutistic, as well as the rationalistic-individualistic currents in Christianity, we find this faith in the Christian *sobornost,* that is, faith in the mystical fellowship of the church as an ecumenical power in the world. This issues in a universal feeling of solidarity, a readiness to serve all and to display the utmost sacrifice in full surrender for the realization of the universal idea of freedom and righteousness. In this *sobornost* we find also a deep warm piety, the redemptive power of all voluntary suffering, the inward impulse to an integral and ideal transformation of life. In this connection we must draw attention to the fact that the Russian people, apart from the worldly motives of political leaders, have put enthusiastic devotion and great sacrifices into the cause of the liberation of the peoples of southern and eastern Europe. The Orthodox Russians have accomplished much for the extension of the Christian faith among the Asiatic people. Actually, the Russian Church alone among the branches of the Orthodox Church has conducted an external mission up to the present day. Today, the Russian people as well as the Russian state is in this sense no longer a part of Europe, but is Eurasian, which means that for this people above all the way lies open to take ideal Christianity to the great communities of Asia: they are called and commissioned of God.

Returning to the element of creaturely reality, we recall that the nation, as well as the separate individual, is subject to the dangers of alienation and even of falling away from

the transcendental and from God; the nation may lapse into sin and diabolical behavior. Self-seeking and self-love, pride, envy, hate and robbery of other nations, are, as history shows us, all too apparent manifestations of the life of nations. Besides, and more important, national self-love exaggerates the value of a people from a conditioned and transitory reality into one unconditioned and eternal: an absolute. As we note here and there today, this frequently means deification of the nation, " national idolatry," self-satisfaction and self-worship. Dechristianized and anti-Christian nationalism lapses then, inevitably, not only into a pagan polytheism but also into a zoological naturalism (blood mysticism). Thus faith in a national mission becomes transformed into a great delusion and into brutal imperialism — a severe spiritual, ethical, and religious disease which often leads to death, to the judgment and punishment of God.

Two chief results of a nation's falling into this error of false nationalism can be observed. Since such nationalism sets up the nation as the highest good it denies the actual, the eternal, the divine value of the individual person and utterly suppresses his freedom. Of course this sin, like every other, fails in the end; no truly free nation can exist without the freedom of the individual persons of whom it is composed. The mother (the nation) cannot live by robbing her children (the individual persons) of their highest good, that is, of their freedom. The individual in human life is an original creation of God, is made in the image of God, and has within him the breath of God. Because of the eternal value of the individual and of his freedom the two greatest tragedies in the world have run their course — the tragedy of Paradise and the tragedy of Golgotha.

Looking further we observe a second major consequence

of false nationalism. The fundamental principle of human fellowship moves in two directions: we see it developing as diversity in unity or as unity in diversity. In the first, reason and meaning is given to the peculiar nature and the unique value of the life of individual personalities and of nations. In the second, the harmonious united life of all individuals and nations attains reason and meaning. False nationalism undervalues other nations, sets up its own nation as the one chosen of God above all others. It claims the call of God to a specific mission only for itself; it sets itself not only above other nations, but also above (or against) the Lord of History and of the world, and through its nationalistic state absolutism ends in that warlike, godless imperialism of international robbery and brutality which finally collapses — under the judgment and the punishment of God.

It is possible to recognize in history two further basic principles of community life: first, the trend of the separate peoples toward unity within the manifoldness of nations, the movement toward the ecumenical, the universal; and second, the inherent divisive tendencies of exclusive nationalism. Exclusive nationalism leads not to unity, but to justifiable conflict for the individuality of peoples threatened and violated by one nation; that is, it leads to division of the nations. Thus, empirically, the evangelical truth of Christ finds confirmation, the truth that individual persons and peoples can only be united harmoniously and permanently through the divine way of love and service. We find confirmed also the truth that only along this evangelical way can the high value and the individuality of persons as well as of peoples be preserved, protected, and cultivated. Christ himself was crucified in the name of just such a false nationalism.

In this light we may rightly judge the significance of

leaders or prophets in the life of nations. In line with the twosidedness of the national life noted above there are two categories of leaders and prophets: false (those serving the evil in the nation) and true (those favored or sent by God). The false prophets preach national egoism, national self-satisfaction, national arrogance, and superiority over all other nations; they go to the extent of exalting their own nation to the position of the highest, final, and absolute good in the world; in actual fact they lead their peoples to self-deification and draw them on to inward and outward collapse. The true leaders and prophets of a people, however, do not remain content with things as they are; they give themselves neither to overestimation of the self and self-exaltation, nor to self-pride, nor to self-worship; above all, they hold to the true command of God and remember the true divine-human mission of their people. With a feeling of the highest responsibility toward this voice and mission they drive themselves and urge their nation with passionate love and hope to strive unremittingly for the higher, and always to have a consciousness that they are unworthy for their mission, that they are no more than humble servants of God and of mankind in all nations. From the Christian standpoint these leaders draw their nations, and all nations, through the way of love and service to all, to the highest achievements in human history, to the greatest expression of both manifoldness in unity and unity in diversity.

We come now to the deduction of a third fundamental principle, namely, the relation of Christianity itself to the nation. How does Christianity, and above all the Holy Scripture, relate itself to the facts which we have hitherto ascertained? In the nature of the case Holy Scripture cannot be silent, giving us no directing principles for a judgment on the problem of the nation — a problem, as we have

seen, of the highest significance and consequence in the life of mankind.

In the Old Testament we find set out in the list of peoples in Genesis 10 the historical distribution of the sons of Noah into separate tribes and nations. Is this distribution a direct or pure creation of God, "an order of grace," or is it "an order of history," a historical process permitted by God, which is maintained for a specific period and whose continuance in any period depends upon God's will?

The whole context of the biblical narrative and of many other elements of biblical history supports the latter point of view. The words of Genesis 12:3 and the messianic destiny of the people of Israel show that in the Bible other nations can be regarded as cursed nations, spurned so far as they give themselves over to idolatry as enemies of God.

The story of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11) illuminates our problem precisely from these two points of view. The incident of the confusion of tongues and the scattering of mankind into peoples divided according to language is indeed, on the one hand, a consequence of opposition to God, but also at the same time a favor of God in order to preserve mankind from presumptuous human striving. In this divine judgment, too, we see the saving purposes of God. Further, we have seen that the foundation of the nations, or of national states, does not consist only in language, since men can speak the same language but, if love is lacking (which understands all things), they do not understand one another. When we connect the tower of Babel narrative with the speaking in tongues under the influence of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:7 ff.), the actual sense of the Babylonian confusion of tongues becomes clearer: it is a parable of the fact that mankind cannot make progress by opposition to God, through its own powers, and still less

can man take heaven by force. The same narrative shows us that since the fall nations, as well as individual men, stand under sin and therefore in need of salvation, and that the certainty of salvation is found among them from the days of their origin (Gen. 12:13). We learn of this promise again and again from biblical history (Ps. 62:10; 22:28; Isa. 52:5 ff.; Amos 2:1 ff.; 9:7).

The history of the chosen people of Israel also affirms this fundamental truth of the Bible. God appears in a special relationship with this people. This people is chosen, not because it is in itself a specially noble people, but on account of the humble believing Abraham who, in the midst of a medley of gods, stood firm in relation to the one true God. Here we have a people and a universal religious mission closely connected. The prophets have, of course, passionate love for their people, but preach at the same time the threat of severe judgment on account of their separation from God. This chosen people is then shattered on the living God, and as it becomes opposed to God, lapses into false national-political tendencies and experiences tribulation on the cross of salvation. Therefore the judgment is appropriate that the people of Israel are rejected since it is no more a " people of God " but wishes to be a " god-people."

That in the New Testament people and peoples are not rejected without some reason, we discern from the fact that Christ speaks the language of his people, loves his people, suffers on account of their sin, and laments their hardness of heart (Luke 19:41). Christ says that he has been sent first to the lost sheep of Israel (compare also Matt. 10:5), and he lives under the traditional forms of their religion.

Or take the apostle Paul: he loves his nation so much that he would be accursed of Christ if thereby Israel might

become blessed (Rom. 9 ff.); and he preaches the gospel first to the Jews (Rom. 1:16; 12:10). He acknowledges, however, the nature of other peoples: in Athens he does not start from the Old Testament, but from the national-religious usages of the Athenians.

In the New Testament, a people and peoples are spoken of as something given, which may not be denied or brought to nought in this world, but are to be encompassed and transformed by the gospel. The gospel directs itself to nations, but first of all to men, to men in their attachment to a people (Matt. 28:19; compare also Rev. 2 and 7). When it is said in Galatians 3:28, "There can be neither Jew nor Greek," the principle is naturally affirmed (as Paul also says in Rom. 10:12; cf. John 17:21) that in Jesus Christ all are *one*. But in the Orthodox East, with all its national conflicts — not to mention its church conflicts — we understand this sentence also in the sense that in Jesus Christ all, nations included, are *equal*. Manifestly the apostle Paul, in this passage, does not deny the differences between Jews and Greeks in this world, just as he does not remove the differences between man and woman when he says in that passage that "there can be neither male nor female." The unity of faith in Christ does not erase these differences, but places male and female, Greek and Jew, in Christ and in his church, in life in general, on an equality. This sentence carries an unusually important significance for the attitude of the church to the nation. Without denying the right of existence to any nation the church sets them on an equality and has to deal with them all in like manner. For that reason Christ sends his apostles to all nations alike, to preach his gospel (Matt. 28:29). For this reason Gentiles need not become Jews in order to believe in Christ. All people are of like worth and of equal status (the apostolic council). And the apostle

Paul, the Jew, therefore preaches Christ as Saviour of all peoples, as Saviour of the whole world.

The basis of this equality is given by the apostle Paul in the following words: "And he made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26; compare also Gen. 2:7 ff.). And not only has he made all one, but all according to his image also (Gen. 5:1). Therefore the same promise and the same gospel apply to all in like manner. When we glance at the national languages in the New Testament we find confirmed again the acknowledgment of the peoples upon the surface of the earth and their fundamental equality (Acts 2:3 ff.; 1 Cor. 14:6–9).

In the New Testament we find also another very important passage concerning our problem, namely, that for the peoples God "determined their appointed seasons and the bounds of their habitation," in order that "they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him . . . for in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:26 ff.). God, therefore, determines for the peoples time (rise, growth, disappearance), place (extension and form), and destiny (general and particular). Thus God acts as Lord of History and of the world. That God chooses the separate peoples as performers of his will, calls them to special tasks and endows them with special gifts for the fulfilment of their tasks, we see in the history of the people of Israel (e.g., Isa. 41). There are also many indications of this same activity of God's in the New Testament (e.g., Rev. 2 and 3). When nations do not perceive and observe this, then God sends prophets to them. When still they continue deaf and blind "and will not walk in his ways" and "will not listen to his law," then there pours out over them "the fury of his anger . . . and it hath set him on fire." (Isa. 42:24–25). In calling

to tasks, as well as in passing judgment, God regards neither countenance nor origin, but only the appointed task and the accomplished act (Acts 10:34 ff.; Rom. 2:11). No preference is shown for any people. Not difference of nationality but difference of deeds is the decisive thing (Chrysostom on Rom. 2:11).

These fundamental principles of the New Testament relative to the question of the nation, even if very important are only of a general character. They simply attest the fact that the New Testament does not leave the nation out of consideration: that all nations are to be assessed equally and that all are in like manner called of God. The New Testament, however, says still more to us about the purpose of God, about the life of the nation and of the nations, especially about the highest, final purpose of their existence. In the first place that passage is to be noted which says that the Kingdom of Christ, of God, is not of this world. Then for us all, whether individual men or members of a nation, our home is not on earth but in heaven: "our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20; compare Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1; Heb. 12:22). Further, we know that all in all belongs to us: "Other foundations can no man lay than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). He leads us to the Kingdom of God in heaven. Ultimately the "end" comes upon earth when "he (Christ) shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24). Even heaven and earth pass away, and we shall see a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21:1). This new world or heavenly home before which the whole temporal world or home passes away, only the "worthy" will attain (Luke 20:35). These "worthy ones" out of this earthly home are set over against the "carnally minded" whose "God is their belly

and whose glory is in their shame." Out of these prominent New Testament passages we see what is the actual end of the nations and of their members upon earth, and what is their final destiny.

What then, briefly, are the fundamental truths implied in these passages? We may put them in this way: The highest end of the nation upon earth is to seek God, to know and to find the one who is God of love, in Him — in love — to live, to move, and have its being. The mission of each people consists in realizing the service of love to all, both to individual men and to peoples, along the way of the cross and of self-sacrifice. The determinative principle, in a word, is to acknowledge and exercise love to one's neighbor in the name of God the Father.

Finally, two further directing principles must be made plain. First of all the fulfilment of this supreme task among mankind rests upon the incarnation of Christ, an incarnation at the same time prolonged within the nations themselves. Further, this fulfilment stands in close organic connection with the existence, the task and the work of the church in the world of nations. Through the grace and love of God the Father, through the leadership of its Head, Jesus Christ, and the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, the church penetrates and gradually transforms the world of nations, she encompasses and unites it in one catholic whole and leads it to the Kingdom of God. This whole task is a work of inner transformation, a leading of the nations over from the kingdom of the natural and historical into the kingdom of the supernatural — the grace of unity. The apostle Paul (Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 10:32; etc.), as well as the early Christians,[4] speaks indeed of " Jews, Greeks, barbarians, Scythians," but also

[4] Cf. A. Harnack, *Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums,* second edition, II, 211 ff.

at the same time of Christians as a "new people," of a new grade of the human race, of a Christian "body politic." This new, chosen race of saintly people of God is also, according to the apostle Peter (1 Peter 2:9), a "royal priesthood," a people for God's own possession.

A fourth source of light upon our problem is found in the century-long tradition of the Orthodox churches which bears witness to a close relationship between the nation, or national state, and the church. An account of this tradition proves that the Orthodox church fully acknowledges the national spirit — the nations; to a certain extent she has nurtured and has entered into a positive connection with them. If it is anywhere possible to speak of a service of the church — not of a relation of servility toward the nations but in the sense of a historic calling (mission) of the church toward the nation — one may look above all to the Orthodox East.

This relationship becomes more clear if we consider certain facts. The Orthodox Church has nearly everywhere found the peoples (with the exception of the Greeks) whom it has converted to be barbarians rather than socially advanced people. She preached the gospel to them, but at the same time provided them with the foundations of a higher spiritual ("cultural") life as a necessary medium for the right adaptation and development of the gospel, starting always from where they were. Almost everywhere the Orthodox Church created writing and literature, deepening and ennobling language and art. She used these cultural instruments at first for the work of her own higher, evangelical task, but this service became also the basis of the national culture of the peoples. Language in particular effected unity. The word "people" in Church Slavonic is "tongue" (language). Further, the clergy were the creators of the language and the pro-

ducers of the literature — teachers of the people in the double sense of the word: religious and national teachers. Out of this connection the national priesthood arose, the actual bridge builders between the church and the nation.

Another element of this connection between the church and the nation in the Orthodox East is the greater similarity between the social-human side of the church, in terms of organization and educational form, and the people as a whole. The communal form of the church, especially through the Orthodox Slavonic principle of *sobornost,* was analogous to the community sense and community practice of the people. Consequently we can observe here also a certain connection between church and people, a characteristic popular coloring of the external form of the church, in order that the church may be better and more easily understood by the people. However, this does not denote a mixing of the concepts of people and church. The church preserves its transcendence, its special nature and authority, and if it is occasionally oppressed and misused the initiative comes from the side of the state.

In the Orthodox East still another element played an important role in the binding together of church and people. Both people and church in the past, especially since the invasion of the Turks and Tartars, underwent the same difficult experience. In those long and difficult times it was the church alone which supplied the people with spiritual support, comfort, awakening and renewal.

Because she shared this common experience the Orthodox Church had an unusual opportunity to be the spiritual mother and leader of her people — to lead her people to God as the Lord of their history, to interpret to them its meaning and task for them as a people, to give them the law of God as the foundation of their historical life, and, not least, to preserve them from sin and to be their guard-

ian. This leadership and unitive endeavor of the Orthodox Church did not take on the form of a worldly external overlordship over people or state. It was a living leadership, inasmuch as it was always actuated from above (transcendental) and from within outwards. Therefore, in the Orthodox East, it is generally admitted that the Orthodox Church has been the soul and conscience of its peoples. Most present-day Orthodox theologians avail themselves of the metaphor " body and soul " in order to give expression to the relation between nation and church.

In this sense we can speak of national churches in the Orthodox East. We can say that the Orthodox churches (at least in principle and for the long centuries of the past down to modern times) were national in that the church mingled with the people without losing its identity, just as Christ, the Head of the church, out of love and in order to be a bringer of salvation, took upon himself the form of a servant but did not lose his identity. Not in vain did the Orthodox churches wage battle earnestly against Arianism. The Orthodox Church acknowledged the peculiar nature of its people and was concerned — at the same time as it ministered to its own need — to bring other peoples to God, to lead them to Christ.[5]

The nineteenth century brought an essentially different situation. Since the rise of nationalism and of national conflicts among the Orthodox peoples in the East, the Orthodox Church finds itself in new circumstances. It faces the national problem in its modern sense, with all its complexity and all its dangers to which we have already called attention and about which something more shall be said.

[5] It must be understood that these final statements signify only the ideal and point out the general lines or basic direction without discussing either the apparent difficulties or the accompanying human inadequacies.

We come now to an examination of Orthodox theology as it bears on our problem. Orthodox theology has not yet dealt with the problem of the *Volksnomos*[6] but it has for a long time faced the problem in actual reality, in hard facts. This has been true at least since the middle of the nineteenth century, and especially in the modern period, the so-called secularistic intellectualism, as well as nationalistic ecclesiastical trends, being in the forefront of discussion among all intellectual and political leaders. The western European fashion of disrespect toward religion and the church has appeared as an infection of considerable power. As long as the Orthodox peoples of southeastern Europe had not attained their political liberty and unity, their temporal leaders esteemed the church as a national institution, through which national political freedom and unity might be attained. But even in that earlier period they either would not allow the church to assume the actual spiritual leadership of the nation or made it very difficult. This inevitably led to a division in principle between the "nation" and the nationalistic state, that is, between the temporal leaders of the nation and the national state.

We do not yet see the final result, but the whole development proceeds in the direction of division. This process is made more difficult today because a great part of the priesthood itself has a strong nationalistic orientation, and each of the new Balkan states (Rumania, Greece, and Jugoslavia) contains considerable Orthodox minorities which, according to the prevailing view, are to be absorbed into their national state homes so that with the church assisting they shall be denationalized. This mixing up of the church with the nationalistic politics of the state

6 By this term is meant "people's culture, soul, consciousness," and the like.

obscures the real crisis in which the relations between church, nation, and state find themselves today. It is also not often clear to many clergy and theologians exactly what this conclusion means in particular instances and to what it may finally lead.

The secularly oriented intellectual and political leaders have little knowledge either of Christianity or of the Orthodox Church, and still less of what *Volksnomos* should mean. But what they express in worldly language and what they demand from or do with the church testifies to the fact that they are inspired by the idea of a *Volksnomos* which is autonomous, claiming independence of religion and the church. They seldom interest themselves in the question whether this "people's soul" harmonizes with the "law of God." In the Orthodox East we find the affirmation openly made that it is the business of the church to serve the people and to support the national state. The church has no right to speak a word of its own in political-social affairs. She cannot place people or state under a "spiritual censorship," still less can she enter into opposition to the state on principle. If she did so she would be a national church no more. The national church owes obedience to the people and faithfulness to the state (the state authorities). This often leads to the Church's being misused through the clergy as a tool of politics. This danger will probably continue for a short time, inasmuch as a nationalistic attitude toward minorities is in question.

In all matters of the spiritual leadership of the people, we observe how the division between the church and the nation or national state comes to a decisive head in the field of principles. For the Orthodox churches the foundation of this division is given in the tradition of the Orthodox Church which has been sketched above. Many

ecclesiastics and theologians of the present day already follow this line of thought in the question of the spiritual leadership of the people. In the face of extreme nationalism, moderate Orthodox opinion is gaining strength in eastern Europe. As representative of this opinion we may note, for instance, among the Russians, religious thinkers, notably N. Berdyaev,[7] V. Zenkovsky,[8] S. Franck,[9] B. Vyscheslavzeff,[10] and theologians like S. Bulgakov,[11] A. Kartaschov,[12] V. A. Beliaev,[13] M. Zyzykin.[14] We find other moderate voices among the hierarchy. Metropolitan Anthony (Chrapovitzki) says concerning our problem:

Patriotism which is cut off from the Christian faith and the church is robbed of all logical meaning. It is no more than an expanded egoism, a raw national egoism, lust after fame and self-interest. Such a patriotism acknowledges moral criteria only for the citizens of its state. Such a patriotism is an idol, a self-deification.[15]

[7] See his article, "Polytheism and Nationalism," in the (Russian) periodical *The Way,* Paris, 1934, No. 43, where he shows that modern nationalism implies a dechristianization of the community, a paganizing of it, a reversion to heathen idolatry.

[8] Cf. his contribution in the collective work *Orthodoxy and Culture,* (Russian) Berlin, "The Idea of the Orthodox Culture," pp. 25 ff., also p. 227; also his article, "The National Question in the Light of Christianity," in the Russian periodical *The Messenger,* Paris, 1934, No. 4, pp. 7 ff.

[9] Cf. his book *The Spiritual Basis of Society* (Russian), Paris, 1930.

[10] Cf. his contribution, "The Religious Meaning of Power," in the collective work *The Church and the State Problem in the Present,* Geneva, 1935, pp. 183 ff.

[11] Cf. his "Observations upon Nationality" (Russian) in the periodical *Questions of Philosophy and Psychology,* Moscow, 1910, No. 3, pp. 385 ff.

[12] Cf. his article "Church and Nationality" (Russian) in the periodical *The Way,* Paris, 1934, No. 44, pp. 4 ff.

[13] Cf. his contribution "Nationalism, War, and Christianity" in the Russian periodical *Christian Selections,* Petrograd, 1915, July–Sept.

[14] Cf. his article *"L'Église orthodoxe et la nation"* in the periodical *Irenikon,* 1936, Prieure d'Amay-sur-Meuse, Belgique, May–June, pp. 266, 277.

[15] Cf. Vol. IX in the Bulgarian periodical *The Orthodox Missionary,* 1932.

We find similar ideas expressed in recent times among the Greeks, especially by P. Bratsiotis and H. Alivisatos, among the Rumanians by Scherban Jenescu, and among the Serbs. Bishop Nikolai Velemirewitsch, of this latter group, wrote recently: [16]

> A good patriot is he who before all is a good man; but in the whole world there has been no power, and will be no power, which can make mankind good except the power of the Christian faith. All qualities of the good Serb, all the best characteristics of the Serbian people — that is, honesty, brotherly love, tenderness, humility, compassion, love of peace, righteousness, goodness, courage, wisdom, moral sensitiveness — are derived from the faith. When thou hast none of these qualities of thy celebrated ancestors, and nevertheless namest thyself a good Serbian, thou art as a sign of a famous firm over an empty business.

And in his writing " Concerning the Nationalism of St. Sava " he says that the true, Christian-Orthodox nationalism is not a narrow and exclusive nationalism, is never chauvinistic, but honors and loves all peoples.

To sum up regarding the problem of nation and church in the Orthodox East: we can give unqualified support to the following assertion. Parallel with the worldly currents of an extreme nationalism, a nationalism which, in recent times, has come to regard the nation and the national state as the highest good of human existence, and to look upon the national church as an attribute of the nation, the Orthodox churches, through their ecclesiastics and theologians, defend the principle that the church, although it acknowledges and cultivates the nation, is in itself non-national, transcendent, of divine origin, a divine-human being.

For centuries, in consequence of difficult historical circumstances, the idea of the catholicity of the church has

[16] In his periodical *Missionary*, No. 1, V.

been weakened and darkened in the consciousness of the Christian society of the East. Now, however, this idea becomes stronger from day to day and catholicity is ever more emphasized through the current strivings for a real unity among individual Orthodox churches and through their participation in ecumenical movements.

In the Christian society of the Orthodox East, one speaks and writes often of a Christian nationalism and patriotism, with emphasis on the word "Christian." Every pagan, godless (a-religious) nationalism and patriotism is decisively rejected because the eternal forms of Christianity are presupposed and expressly emphasized as the absolute foundation for all human and community life. The service of the church is to be a spiritual mother and leader of the nation, to lead the people to God, and to make all peoples sons of God.

With reference to the ecumenical side of our problem we can say, on the basis of our discussion, that from the standpoint of the Orthodox Church the Christian church in origin, being, and aim is fundamentally a universal community. The church is a universal community for the reason that it is a holy, catholic, and apostolic church, uniting all those whom it encompasses through one faith as a catholic unity. All its members are one and have solidarity in creation (one God the Creator, one blood, one image of God), solidarity in sin, in redemption, and in salvation. Therefore the church is not a mere organization or a humanly united society, but the mystical body of Jesus Christ. The "natural" here becomes a new creation. In the church the natural is not denied, but the supernatural is set above the natural. Toward the nations a transformation of the essence of Christianity according to their special characteristics is neither attempted nor realized, but to them is made an adaptation and appropriation of Chris-

tianity. In principle, no antinomy lies in this demarcation; it is the basis for a manifoldness in unity and for the possibility of the cooperation of the peoples, the possibility of a vocation in the sense of the service of love toward one another (1 Cor. 12:12 ff.) till they all become one people of God, children of God, all one in God the Father.

Catholicity, as universality, is ideal in character. It is realized in history when the nations, on this Christian basis, give expression to the ideal, when they give evidence of the universality of Christianity in their actual achievements, and help it to victory. In the fulfilment of that purpose Dostoievski saw the high destiny of the Orthodox Russian people. This present-day faith of the Orthodox Church is not a rosy optimism arising because it underestimates the nature and the effect of evil and sin in this world. On the other hand, it is no pessimism. The Orthodox Church simply believes that for the renewal and final salvation of men, of nations and of mankind, a radical renewal, a " catastrophic salvation," is necessary. Therefore, as opposed to the irrationality of sin, including the sin and demonism of the nations, the Orthodox Church emphasizes the eschatology of salvation. The ecumenicity of the Orthodox Church is a prophetic-eschatological ecumenicity.

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

by

EDWIN EWART AUBREY

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

ANYONE who has watched the struggle between Church and State in Germany or Russia is vividly reminded that the spirit of a people (*Volk*) may be brought into opposition to Christian ethics and to Christian institutions. In both these countries, however, it is very difficult to say how far the real public mind is opposed to Christianity. When the national community (*Volk*) is set in antithesis to the Christian constituency, the opposition may easily be an artificial one, for they are inevitably "members one of another," since the members of the churches in a given country cannot abstract themselves from the social life of the nation in which they live. Furthermore, these two countries present the spectacle of a once powerful established church now throttled by the government; whereas, in the United States, there never has been an established church.

It is perhaps valuable, therefore, to offer in this essay an interpretation of the basis of American thinking on this problem. We can then examine the more general problem of the Christian constituency in relation to the national life, and try to show what is the function of the churches in the life of a people.

1. THE AMERICAN SETTING OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of church and community assumes a quite different form in the United States from that which characterizes most of the European countries. There are a number of reasons for this difference.

In the first place, we have in the United States no *Volk* in the German sense of this word. The idea of a national community based on a homogeneous racial grouping and defined by a common attachment to a soil which has for so many centuries given life to the German people, and the notion that in the process of human history this German people pursues its own unique destiny for which its peculiar standpoint and its racial tradition prepare it — these conceptions are foreign to American thought and experience. We are a country of heterogeneous cultural background. Our streams of immigration displaced the native Indians who belonged to the land, and this conquest was completed only within the last fifty years; so that the culturally dominant group is not that which "belongs" to the land. Even the immigrant groups have fluctuated in their numerical proportions. During our colonial period, prior to 1790, the British immigrant group constituted more than three-fifths of the total population, and this proportion remained the same till about 1850, when the German and Scandinavian groups began to increase. The stream of south European immigration set in in the nineties, introducing still another religious and cultural current into the American scene.

Here we are, then, with the complex variety of cultural traditions; and any student of American political life encounters these crosscurrents in public opinion. All European political or cultural conflicts are re-enacted on American soil. There is no uniform body of public sentiment or of cultural presuppositions to which appeal can be made. This condition has two results in American life. In the first place, movements have arisen which seek to impose one cultural tradition upon all groups in the nation: the Daughters of the American Revolution have sought to stamp the Anglo-Saxon impress upon all newcomers in

their program of " Americanization." An important economic factor enters here: the fact that some cultural backgrounds (notably the African, the Italian, the Mexican, and the Slavic) have been represented principally by unskilled laborers. Thus their submerged economic position has tended toward their cultural subordination. Violent attempts at such cultural subordination explain such phenomena as the Ku Klux Klan in recent decades. The other result of this cultural complexity is that, precluding as it does any common assumptions which we can take for granted, it forces Americans into a greater exercise of external organization than would otherwise be necessary. This explains the characteristic often noted by European observers that we want to organize everything; for external organization tends to appear where common presuppositions are lacking. At the same time, we are forced to live together, and certain external uniformities tend to drive us into common action without common assumptions. This in turn gives rise to the general American approach to problems of ecumenical cooperation: that common action can be engaged in without waiting for the clarification of basic assumptions. We have had to do that in our national life in order to cope with problems of a rapidly moving society.

In so far as a common national mind appears it expresses itself largely in the negative form that European differences — which create our major obstacle to the development of an American cultural unity — shall not be allowed to disrupt our own nation. This helps to explain the popular insistence on neutrality in this country. We seem to have coalesced into four or five regional forms of " community " in the United States at present, but not into any real national " community " of feelings and assumptions. There do seem to be fairly clear-cut differentiations into

the east, the south, the middle west, the western plains, and the Pacific coast — differentiations which mark off boundaries of economic and political outlook, of general moral attitudes (mores), of self-conscious regional solidarity, and of general *Lebensanschauung*. One has only to mention to Americans the cities of Boston, Richmond, Chicago, Omaha, and San Francisco to suggest at once these cultural differences. How soon these regional mentalities are likely to merge in a national community of thought and feeling is a matter of speculation. It is really only since the decline of immigration in the last two decades and the stabilizing of the birth rate that a sense of national stability is emerging. We have nothing in this country clearly corresponding to the feeling of continuity in national history that attaches to the term *Volk*. Few Americans would incline to think of their nation as a *Schöpfungsordnung* — a God-established national destiny whereby world history could be brought to its fulfilment. While there is occasional talk of " God's country " this is without theological significance, and is merely a superlative way of referring to material blessings. It is true, however, that a measure of community corresponding to the German *Volk* appears in what is often called the " American dream." This is the hope of developing a nation grounded in equal opportunity and democratic freedom, with vigorous and aggressive improvement of the conditions of human life, free from artificiality and subterfuge, and with mutual enrichment by our many peoples. Yet only recently have the American intelligentsia been moving on from imitation of European cultural patterns to the creation of an indigenous culture.

For over a century and a half we have had a disestablishment of the churches from state support. Except for exemption from taxes, religious institutions receive no

emoluments from the government. At the same time, the United States has been a real pioneer in religious liberty, and care has always been taken to respect the religious scruples of our many sects. There are religious ceremonies in our national life: the President at his inauguration kisses the Bible, sessions of the Congress are opened with prayer, and in the autumn the President issues a Thanksgiving Proclamation couched in religious terms and read in churches and synagogues alike. But these religious acts do not identify the nation with any particular religious group. They seek rather to rise above particular theologies in a common recognition of one God. The Congress, as the political expression of the national unity-in-diversity, never passes upon religious questions as such; and no such controversy as the recent Prayer Book revision controversy in England is conceivable in the United States.

It is becoming clear that the issue in this country will doubtless be faced in the area of public education. So long as the church held a virtual monopoly of education for character, dealing with fundamental moral values while the school dealt exclusively with secular information, there was no meeting ground for a conflict. But more recent educational theory has led public educators to assume responsibility for character training. Education is viewed as practice in the arts of cooperative living, and consequently moral implications are present throughout. Furthermore, such working out of social relationships in the classroom and on the playground inculcates definite standards and objects of loyalty. At this point the contact, and potential conflict, with religious ideals becomes obvious. The case of a group known as Jehovah's Witnesses, who incurred governmental coercion for their refusal to participate in a classroom ritual of saluting the national flag, is only an extreme instance of a more general problem. But

where such conflict emerges it does not indicate that the state is affiliated with any special theological interpretation of the religious bases of morality. The official policy is to disclaim concern for special theological tenets. The church and the state are not bound together by any community of popular sentiment such as makes an Anglican church the official center of communal religious values in the English town or village.

At the same time, we have developed in the United States an unusual ease and rapidity of communication among our people as a result of widespread motor travel and the popular press. This leads to that flexibility of thought which so often puzzles European observers. We are accustomed to encounter these differences of cultural outlook and have learned good-naturedly to take them for granted as part of our public life. This can be seen in any municipal election in an American metropolis, where an astute politician can trade upon the special cultural prejudices of Italian and German immigrant stocks or of those of Irish, Swedish, or Negro background. While this may be our avenue to that community which may some day come to characterize us as a *Volk,* it is at present a basis for a tolerance of criticism and an elasticity of thought which often borders on skepticism. But, at any rate, it relaxes the rigidity which so often characterizes the " national outlook " of a more homogeneous country.

It is an interesting fact that sociology has developed far more rapidly and extensively in the United States than anywhere else. Whatever may be the merits of this academic discipline as a social science, and whatever may be the explanation of this precocious growth, it is clear that by means of it we have been led to examine the cultural processes from the empirical standpoint. It is a truism to say that consciousness is heightened by conflict; and it may well be that the conflict of cultures within our own

social life accounts for this preoccupation with the study of social process. In any case, cultural sociology has subjected the phenomena of culture to penetrating analysis under national conditions which have thrown cultural contrasts into bolder relief. It is so much easier to study objectively the cultural attitudes of a Polish, or Mexican, or Russian Jewish, or Scandinavian group in America, because comparisons and contrasts can be so clearly drawn within our own country. This formal study is supplemented by the informal observations made in schools in the state systems where children of these differing backgrounds are to be found sitting side by side. Under these conditions it is difficult for any group to assume its superiority and God-given mission as blandly as in a homogeneous community where no rivalry appears. Any culture is thus treated with deference but without slavish adulation, and the consequence is that the claims of community (*das Volk*) are never accepted with the mystical fervor characteristic of the homogeneous nation. At the present stage, heterogeneity is too obvious to be theorized out of existence.[1]

2. THE NATURE OF COMMUNITY

It may serve to clarify the term "community" or *Volk* if we examine the processes which give rise to that unity of social outlook and assumptions which characterizes a people. For this unity the phrase "a culture" is usually employed in American sociology; and it is from this sociological point of view that we propose to enter the present analysis.

The term "culture" has two meanings in English. In

[1] The question may fairly be raised whether the actual heterogeneity in Germany (e.g., as between Prussians, Bavarians, and Thuringians) and in other European nations is not overlooked rather than dissolved in the term *Volk*. But such a critical discussion lies beyond the scope of this particular essay.

the first place it refers to the elaborate structure of social relations which make the life of a people, such as "Indian culture." In the second place it connotes a certain quality of life in an individual person — a man of culture, a cultured woman. To the second of these we shall return in section 4 of this essay. For our approach to the problem of *Volk* let us now examine culture as a complex system of social relations.

When we observe the civilization of a very different people we are first impressed by the external differences: the form of dress, the style of architecture, the way of using tools, the forms of salutation, and so forth. A little closer inspection reveals the nature of their institutional practices: the organization of their governmental control, the form of priestly hierarchies, the relations of the family, the regulations governing property and contract, etc. But the foreigner who dwells among a strange people and seeks to understand them discovers after a while that there is something deeper and subtler than these folkways and institutions, something built into the very structure of thought and feeling, that underlies these external aspects of the culture. There are internal attitudes not easily grasped by external observation. We call them mores and public opinion; and every diplomat knows that an understanding of any nation is impossible without sympathetic insight into these attitudes, this "mentality" of the people. Here lies the real "community," the secret of the *Volk*.

The external aspects, the folkways and institutions, are the accepted ways of doing things. So habitual are they that they tend to become nonrational ways of behaving. They are activities which have "always been done this way," and their persistence tends to raise them above rational consideration. Indeed, there is a sense of immediate connection between these ways of acting and their

technical excellence: customs of other peoples are "queer," "curious," and even "inferior." For these patterns of behavior are unconsciously imitated and become an unconscious part of the activity of the members of the group. The individual who acts in these ways shows that he "belongs," and he is approved. Thus are built up around them by association (or "conditioning" as the psychologists now say) strong emotional attitudes which lend them an inner sanction or authority. This may be so profound that it is taken for an instinctive, biological necessity, and a theory of racial superiority is formulated to rationalize this deep-seated feeling.

We see, then, how the external aspects of a culture (institutions and folkways) are reinforced by internal aspects (mores and public opinion). Mores are folkways which are considered to be related to the welfare of the group. They are, therefore, distinct from certain folkways like the use of knife and fork, but are embodied in other folkways like modes of salutation between the sexes (e.g., note the Oriental objection to kissing on the mouth in public). The moral attitudes of a people are thus a composite of feelings towards certain folkways (feelings which have been ingrained by education in the traditional ways of behaving) and judgments relating these folkways to the welfare of the group. How rational these judgments are will depend on the degree of emancipation of the individual from socially inherited attitudes. Such judgments, when shared by the populace, are spoken of as public opinion in the moral realm. Public opinion is a body of judgments of the group on matters significant for group life; and as this significance becomes more profound the public opinion takes on the character of mores.

Since the mores involve judgments of values, they are related to more remote ends, to conceptions of ultimate

human destiny (on which, in the last analysis, definitions of what makes for the "welfare" of the group must depend). Such ultimate conceptions do not usually appear in the actual content of public opinion; but they are implicit.[2] Mores, then, are not so easily changed. Furthermore, the ways of seeking an intellectual approach to the more remote ends of group life may vary. From this fact arise differences in "racial mentalities." Groups which are culturally unified tend to develop characteristic approaches to problems, so that we think of the British tendency as being extrovert, while the Russian of the *ancien régime* was regarded as essentially introvert. Clearly such generalizations are precarious, but they do stand for felt differences in cultural outlook. From these cultural backgrounds the individual thus receives his "mind-set," his ways of looking at life (*Lebensanschauung*), including the unconscious criteria of value used in passing judgment on all sorts of questions of individual or social import. Consider the indifference of an East Indian to the haughty Anglo-Saxon rejection of some idea as "impractical"! (Where cultural unity is undeveloped, as in the United States, there is inevitable conflict of those mind-sets, resulting in great instability of public opinion, and in a freer empirical attitude toward new problems and new phenomena. This may explain the vogue of the pragmatic, functional test in American thinking as well.) [3]

Now, between those external and internal aspects of cul-

[2] In the ancient Hebrew conception of the "chosen people," the pride in nation was definitely related to a conception of God's purpose for the world, and took on a moral aspect. Similar ideas appear in modern thought in "the white man's burden" and the *Volk als Schöpfungsordnung*.

[3] This is the basis for censorship and exclusion of alien influences as a means often employed to bolster up a threatened ideology. Its fallacy is, of course, that these measures are taken only when the influx of alien patterns has been recognized, and then it is too late.

ture there is continual interaction. The institutions of a given society are organizations which embody basic concepts or purposes. In some institutions the purpose is clearly understood: e.g., military institutions exist to afford physical protection to a nation. In some institutions the purpose is in dispute: e.g., the traditional theory of marriage has held that it exists to procreate and rear children, whereas many modern theorists hold that children are not the central concern of marriage, which exists to afford mutual satisfaction and companionship for two members of opposite sexes. In still other institutions the purpose is not seriously considered, being often lost sight of in the activities it has engendered: this is largely true of our economic institutions despite the basic criticisms aroused by the depression through which we have been passing. Between the conception of an institution's purpose and the organization which embodies that purpose there is continual interaction and tension, since social changes always require readjustment of the institutional structure to give new implementation to the purpose. Where isolation of a group allows an institution to be perpetuated in its structure, the concept is thereby reinforced. What is always done tends to be regarded as "sound." Conversely, reinforcement of a concept or purpose from other quarters tends to strengthen the structure of the institution: e.g., a philosophical defense of belief in God serves to give added strength to the church.

On the other hand, contact with different organizational patterns tends to make people raise questions regarding the validity of the purpose of familiar institutions, as when democratic and fascist institutions are brought face to face. Criticism of institutions then ensues; and this is why our age of rapid and easy communication has aroused such a critical spirit with reference to hitherto "respectable" in-

stitutions. The prophet is always an insider with outside experience, like Amos, the Judaic herdsman, selling his produce to Assyrian and Egyptian merchants and hearing the echoes of imperial thunderings. Such a prophet may criticize the structure of the institution, recommending more efficient organization to effect its purpose, and become an ecclesiastical reformer. Or he may criticize the formulated concept which lies at the center of the institution, and call for theological restatement. Or again, he may question the basic significance of the purpose connoted by the formulated concept, and throw down his challenge to radical reorientation of the whole institution, as Jesus seems to have done with the Jewish law. This last and extreme type of prophecy amounts virtually to a new creation in a culture; and it will therefore be looked upon as apostasy, as abandonment of the institution. Hence the death of Jesus, and hence the Gentile mission of Paul as its logical culmination.

This is, then, the process of culture and cultural change in folkways, mores, and institutions. In this process the church, as a social institution, finds itself involved. All of the things that have been said here about institutions in general apply to the church in particular. In this sense, the church is to be understood as a part of culture.

3. THE PECULIARITY OF THE CHURCH AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

The question therefore immediately arises: By what right does the church assume authority to direct criticism at other institutions? Here is the question which laymen inevitably asked at the Oxford Conference. This is, in my judgment, the practical question which underlies the discussion of secularism. If the church is regarded as on a par with other social institutions and subject to the same

laws of social development, and if its concept or basic purpose is statable with reference to social functions in the same way as for other institutions, then we have a situation in which the church is regarded as simply and solely a phase of culture. It then belongs to "this age," this *seculum:* it has been "secularized." At this point it is then fair to ask how the church can rise above other institutions so as to pass judgment upon them.

Here we come to the heart of the problem of church and community. Here, in Emil Brunner's terminology, the divine imperative and the social institutions are brought face to face. Admittedly, the churches that we know in local communities are a strange mixture of current social prejudices and of loyalty to something which lies beyond the most rational and the most worthy of our social opinions. Yet this combination of outreaching faith and stumbling formulation, of high ideals and mediocre achievement, of representative priestly functions, and all-too-human ecclesiastical pretensions, seems to be the only way of carrying on the religious function in the community. The difficulties are inherent in the social process of religious institutions. The Christian constituency is *in* the world. Can it help being *of* the world? How can it stand above the surrounding world as a lantern set upon a hill, even while it is a leaven in the lump of human society?

A clue to the answer may be found by reminding ourselves that while the church, like other social institutions, embodies a purpose in an organization structure, it embodies a peculiar type of purpose which is the core of this particular institution.

For we may look at this central differentiating character of the Church as peculiar by virtue of its origin, or we may regard it as peculiar in its function. That is to say, we may

seek either for an abiding essence traceable to a supernatural revelation, or for a perpetual concern which is characteristic of its direction of change — a perennial concern with ultimate values. It is further possible to combine these two in a religious world view which thinks of the ultimate values as implicit in the origin. This last has been the characteristic Christian view. From this standpoint, then, the church is distinctive among social institutions because it alone, of all the institutions of society, is primarily concerned with man's origin and destiny. Because of this special concern, it bases its authority upon an objective truth which reaches out beyond the social milieu to the universe, and beyond the human adventure to the larger context from which man derives his meaning. Its task among the institutions of society is to cultivate in man the sense of a past and a future which reach out illimitably beyond the present, and to help him to see and to live out his meaning as a person on that cosmic stage.[4]

In this the church stands close to the concerns of philosophy and ethics. But philosophy, while it embodies speculation upon these ultimate matters, is never institutionalized, and thus appears as an abstract undertaking when compared with the fellowship of the really *Christian* church. It is true that philosophy becomes religious at the point where decision is made with one's whole life at stake; but it is also true that the church is a body of those who make a commitment beyond the range of social calculation. Ethics as a discipline either remains in the speculative area of philosophy, or becomes practically embodied in institutions like education. To this extent it is incorrect to base the peculiarity of the church as a social

[4] It must be regretfully admitted that the church as referred to in this and the succeeding paragraphs is the church at its best, not as we usually encounter it. We speak of the church in principle — but how often she is false to her principle!

institution upon its ethical character. The important distinction lies in the transition from an ethical to a religious perspective; that is, from concern with the adjustment of human relations for mutual benefit to concern with the ultimate meaning of human life on which the determination of " mutual benefit " must rest. Just as religion transcends ethics by cultivating contact with eternity, so the church differs from educational agencies in any culture by its traffic with a larger world than our social environment.

To cultivate this sense of eternity is the function of all such dialectical criticism as that of Karl Barth and his forerunner, Kierkegaard. As in the antinomies of Kant, the experience of men is pushed back to its boundaries where solutions become contradictions, and we are challenged to reach out in faith where knowledge fails us. For faith is, in the words of John Macmurray, " what you propose to do in the face of your ignorance." It is the task of good preaching — as of other forms of religious education — to lure people beyond their accepted answers for life's riddles to deeper questionings. To accomplish this, it is necessary both to break down facile self-confidence and to point a way. Mountain mists conceal the summits but someone shows the trail to the heights, and the wayfarer goes on beyond the foothills that had looked so high. This sense of eternity is also to be cultivated in worship and the mystical experience, where the surrounding mystery of life holds us in its grip and transmutes our petty satisfactions into profounder longings, our pride into humility, our self-assurance into pious hope, and our fearful, wavering wills into calm and steady devotion. At this point, reflection and mystical absorption move over into decision where the wager must be made with all of life as the stakes. In such a moment of actual decision a man stands at the outpost of his accumulated experience, and on the threshold of an

eternity which he cannot fathom but in relation to which he must now act.

By all these paths, man is led to the perpetual tension between the present and the boundless context which we call eternity. In consequence, the church is always a conscious fellowship of failure, a community of sinners. Here it stands in its peculiar place among the institutions of society. The awareness of tension between the temporal and the eternal fosters a discontent which makes the sinner repentant. It is this repentance which makes it impossible for the really Christian church to be censorious and pharisaical. If the church issues a call to society to repent, it must be a call to join the church in its own repentance. Here is the secret of the church as a leaven in society; it engenders the spirit of repentance whereby self-criticism appears among the adherents of other social institutions. It cannot loudly proclaim its right to criticize the social order, it can only set the example and foster the attitude of self-criticism. But its self-criticism is of a drastic sort, for it is born of comparison, not with the feasible, but with the highest conceivable. Yet, because the community is caught in its own established values, which are not merely intellectually accepted, but emotionally ingrained, the self-criticism of the community is well-nigh impossible at the religious level. Hence the church stands ever at the elbow of society as it seeks to justify itself and says, " Not enough! Not enough! " until its challenge sounds like the unrelenting voice of God.

At the same time, the church is like other institutions a fellowship of faith, fostering confidence and hope. Unlike other institutions, however, it seeks an *ultimate* basis of confidence and hope. It cannot rest content with assurances of " national security," of " economic stability," of " familial happiness," but pushes on to deeper sources of

stability and joy. Its philosophy of culture cannot stop short of a religious faith. It sees society and all its institutions standing at a point of decision on the brink of the unknown; and it cannot therefore find happiness in being conformed to this world. Thus it has ability to enter into cooperative relations with other institutions while, at the same time, refusing to accept their standards. It is, in this sense, " in the world but not of the world." This is, I believe, what the exponents of Christianity as " an interim ethic " seek to express in their eschatology. From the church's standpoint no social absolutes are acceptable, but must give way to the claims of another order. It remains skeptical of all of them, and expresses this skepticism by asserting that they are valid only for a restricted context of reality. Over against them the church will set a wider reality from the very scope of which is derived a greater truth. In one form, this wider context is the fellowship of Christian faith throughout the world, transcending particular national or cultural absolutes in the spirit of ecumenical Christianity. And this spirit is not merely that of a congeries of national churches, but the *Una Sancta,* the holy, universal commission and faith of those who follow Christ. But there is also another context of reality to which the *Una Sancta* points. It is the cosmos in which our little earth is set, the vastness of which defies the intellect. Not knowing, we reach out in hope. But hope is the fond mother of credulity; and when we become credulous, false knowledge has usurped the throne of faith. It is the acknowledgment of her ignorance which must save the church from pride, and from arrogating to herself powers of salvation which she knows she does not have. Thus humbled, she takes her place among the social institutions with greater confidence, because she does not claim too much. Her very humility is the ground of her chal-

lenge to the unwarranted claims which the community makes upon her members in the name of narrower life.

4. THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN IN THE COMMUNITY

But we are in danger of dealing in abstractions unless we remember that institutions exist by virtue of the loyalty of their adherents. Yet these adherents are themselves members of several institutions at the same time, and these various institutions exist in them as attitudes of loyalty and devotion. Let us return to our second conception of culture: as a personal hierarchy of values in the "cultured" man. The common misconception of personal culture makes of the cultured individual a mere conformist to accepted practices. On the other hand, the cultured man sees the practices of his surrounding culture in perspective — the long perspective of the ages of human history, the broad perspective of the range of different cultures all around the world, the deep perspective of human nature and its needs, and the lofty perspective of great ideals. With such perspective, he cannot be a shallow conformist, but must inevitably be a critical member of that community in which he has been reared. In him its tensions appear as psychological conflicts, just as surely as he embodies in his emotional attitudes its outlook on life. Here appear the conflicts between church and community in their acute form as personal spiritual crises. But here, too, is where decision takes place. That is why the layman is so important in the church: his life is bound up with the community to a greater degree than that of the professional religious leader; and in him the ethical decisions reach their acutest form. What is the meaning of the church in relation to community for him?

The conflict is in him a conflict of attitudes, a conflict between the judgments of value, the presuppositions, the unconscious assumptions prevailing in his community and

those which are built into his life as a church member. But the attitudes of his church membership have a reference beyond the fellowship in the social group which constitutes the local ecclesiastical institution; they reach out to the eternal objects of religious faith — to God, to Jesus Christ, to the Kingdom. Here he stands in a religious fellowship, but also in the solitude where no one else can accompany him — the solitary moment of personal decision, when *his* life is being wagered on his faith, the point where *he* touches infinity and where the accumulated life and wisdom of the community reach out through *him* towards the limitless. At that point, some attitudes *must* prevail — if there be conflict — in order for decision to take place. The crucial question is, what attitudes shall prevail?

Here the meaning of the life of the Kingdom of God becomes clear. It is not any specified organization of society, but a basic complex of attitudes built around a faith in God and in human destiny. When Jesus taught that if we want the Kingdom of God we must live as though it were here and we shall find that it is here, this would seem to be what he meant. If the attitudes which govern your life are the attitudes of the Kingdom, the institutions of society (*die Ordnungen*) will have those attitudes built into them, and when this is done the society will have become the Kingdom. When — Ah, there's the rub! For we are asked to live in terms of the attitudes of the Kingdom when it is not really here. Here is the decisive question for Christian ethics. It is also the decisive question for the relations of church and community.

Having defined community in terms of a set of common attitudes among a people (a populace), we now see that the basic conflict for the church appears just here. A man must choose whether to be a member of a group at the level of its accepted assumptions, or at a deeper level where

these assumptions are subjected to scrutiny. At the deeper level, he will find himself estranged from many of his compatriots who regard him as a deserter. He has deserted the shallows for the depths. Only at those depths can he now think about his life and his duty in the community. Every item takes on new depth of meaning. At this new level the church can meet him, if it will, with its own profundities of insight. It can tell him of God, it can ask him to probe deeper, it can offer him a fellowship of those who are both seekers for the depths and doers of the Word, it can challenge him with Jesus Christ to live the attitudes of the Kingdom of God here and now. If he find such a church — and God grant that we may be enabled to offer it to him — he will promptly be embroiled in conflict at those points where Christian faith and the demands of his community are in conflict. At such a time, he can be steadied by his faith that the demands of the community can ultimately be fulfilled only when it submits itself to that fate which is written into the structure of the world for human life. Then he can turn again and find his place among his own people, willing to lose his life for the Kingdom's sake, that the community may learn to know the law of its own destiny.

The church stands in relation to community, then, as a fellowship of faith — of a faith which is a commitment of life in the spirit (the attitudes) of the Kingdom. In its own life it should exemplify those attitudes and foster them in its members, that, being strengthened in the inner man, they may go forth into the community with devotion and power to guide the life of the community. By its own life, the church should continually point beyond its fellowship to the realities which it has sensed, and which it believes are the foundation for all human life, whether in the church or in the community.

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY IN THE UNITED STATES

by

H. Paul Douglass

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY IN THE UNITED STATES

A COUNTRY road stretches along a low ridge facing broad marshes, and distantly glimpsing the sea. Some thirty homes face the road over a distance of three miles. Their farm-lands back into the forest. In these homes and on these lands dwell perhaps a hundred and fifty people — men, women, young and old, intimately related in the business of living.

From the viewpoint of the science of society they constitute a rural primary group. At the roots of civilization of the United States lie several millions of such groups, some larger, others smaller. Their land base, the area defined as a neighborhood, is often determined by topographic isolation. It is physically linked by a system of roads. The people frequently constitute a kindred group; they may be also linked by the ties of a particular race or common antecedents as immigrants from another country. They share and maintain common institutions, most frequently church, school, and economic enterprises. They also share noninstitutionalized interests of a social and economic sort. They operate rudimentary forms of government.

Such a neighborhood is a fragmentary community. Its people cherish the " we " attitude and sentiment. From childhood they unconsciously participate in an invisible unity of shared experience which binds the little group together and distinguishes it from all others. Within this narrow circle, a common " definition of the situation " is possessed by all. The neighbor feels at home within the

accepted conventions and roles of the neighborhood circle. He knows, without telling, what behavior response to bring to every situation. Even in the next neighborhood he is a stranger, lacking the distinct sense of place and of easy familiarity in personal relationships which he has at home. Underneath his habitual level of consciousness lies a deep sense of dependence, both physical and spiritual, upon the neighborhood environment.

The most essential distinction commonly insisted upon by sociologists is that community means the sharing by people of the general business of life and the generalized forms of conduct. The community must, therefore, command interest varied enough for complete life. It must be able within itself to satisfy all the essential common interests of collective existence. For this definition of community the neighborhood is too narrow.

Neighborhood generally possesses, however, one of the most basic characteristics of complete community; namely, the maintenance of common institutions. Three out of four neighborhoods in the United States are definitely built about common institutions. These furnish the central ties, to which the ties of family or race or unorganized neighborly activity are contributory. And of these institutions, it is the church which is, by far and away, the most frequent primary core of the associated life. In the United States, at least, active neighborhood groupings on a religious basis are decidedly preponderant.

Sociology defines the church broadly as one of the major cultural concretions of society, showing relative rigidity and persistence. This simply means that the characteristic life of the social group habitually and continuously manifests itself in this form.

Scientifically speaking, the invariable marks of the church seem to be the following: It is a permanent group-

ing of people possessed of the " we " sentiment in the field of religion, together with their reciprocating attitudes toward one another and the conventional behavior patterns which they hold in this field. The church group also invariably has and holds in common certain cultural objects of symbolic value, highly charged with emotion and sentiment. It is a communion in holy things; for Christians the Bible, the sacraments, the cross. The church group almost invariably also possesses cultural objects of utilitarian value. Its spiritual enterprises require material facilities so that it becomes a communion in real estates and buildings, as well as in holy things. Its property and other material possessions constitute a most powerful bond of union. Finally, the church possesses language symbols, either oral or written, expressing rationalized patterns in the realms of thought and conduct. It has a creed and a code, whether or not formally expressed.

In the simplest and most generic case, the one which has characterized the majority of human lives from the race's beginning, the neighborhood community and its institutions have been the chief bearers of social heredity. Nearly all of the particular transactions of culture and religion occur corporately within these face-to-face relations. The religious person, for example, has no direct contact with the great religious association as a whole. The church universal does not touch him.

But in the church parochial such things happen as these: A child grows up in a wooded countryside where population has long been dwindling. The church is open only for the two months of the short summer. Memory now interrogates childhood from the beginning to the end, and can recall not a single articulate word of religion which was significant. No article of the church's teaching was clothed with emotional convincingness or power; what did might-

ily impress the child was the strange behavior of adults in church. Here were familiar hands known as for ever grasping — the ax, the spade, the reins, the oar, which sowed, reaped, washed, mended, weeded, kneaded, knitted, but which lay passive in church, relaxed, quiet. Faces were smoothed, voices made gentle. What was this strange other dimension of adult life, belonging to the high, still, white meetinghouse, which put tense and knotted hands at rest? What was this mystery of the neighborhood's other self, the church? No other experience of early life posed so impressive and intriguing a question.

For however inarticulately felt, one could not fail, somehow, to sense the extraordinary extension of the social group implied in unique adult behavior in the church.

Another child is born on the prairie two decades after the first turning of the sod by the tools of man. When he is five or six the church is twenty-five years old. On this, the anniversary of the first significant span of its life, the community remembers its dead from the beginning of the settlement. The church has no stained glass in its windows, only colored panels of oiled paper pasted on clear glass. On other strips of paper, the country newspaper prints the names of the dead in heavy black type. They in turn are pasted across the windows, and beneath them these words:

Let saints below in concert sing
With those to glory gone,
For all the servants of the King
In earth or heav'n are one.

One family we dwell in Him,
One church, above, beneath;
Tho' now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.

Here was a symbolic transaction which projected the remote group of prairie folk into an unseen world. A

definition of the social situation was set forth from which flowed a sense of appropriate conduct different in quality from that sanctioned on the everyday level.

Herein the church is unique: it alone of societies expands its corporate relationships to include a second world. It

> postulates a supra-social form of relationship which within the religious assembly prescribes the social relations of the members. The church is a form of association in which men enter into relations with one another ostensibly determined by the prior relationship to nonhuman being or beings; for Christians with God or the saints in light.[1]

Indelible and determinative things then are happening generation after generation within hundreds of thousands of face-to-face communities and religious groups and not elsewhere. Here and in the family the major part of the social tradition of the group is actually communicated. All the more meaningful and more powerful significances of religion and the religious expansion of the sphere of social relationships are corporately present in their bosom. In brief, sociologically speaking, the neighborhoods are the essence of community, while, religiously speaking, the churches are the church.

The sharing of life in the realm of religion which constitutes the church is always a part, greater or smaller, of the shared common business of life which constitutes the community. Hence the most natural way to identify the church is to give it the name of the community. This may be merely a means of identifying location without implying any moral affinity — as when an apostle writes, " The Church of God in Corinth "; or may intend to imply some inner identification as well as a legal connection of church and community, as when one says, " The Church of Scot-

[1] MacIver, *Society, Its Structure and Changes* (New York, 1931), p. 237.

land." For the church, however, society reaches upward as well as outward. Hence a curious alternation goes on as to the naming of churches. One gets a religious designation, the name, say, of a saint or of a saintly quality; another a place designation, say the name of a city street. These alternations witness to the church's consciousness that it stands in dual social relations, of which it remembers now one, now the other.

This paper proposes to recognize both universal aspects of the church's conscious relationships. In its description and preliminary analysis it will adopt the immediate viewpoint and methodology of science. This means that it will chiefly explore the relation of the churches to human communities of which they are visibly parts, without raising the question of the truth of their religious assumptions.

It is, however, to be noted that the admission of such phenomena as the communion of saints with a spiritual Lord and with fellow saints in an unseen world into the universe of scientific description enlarges the scope of factors to be discussed, however naturalistically. But it does more: it changes the impression of balance derived from the total phenomena. Given this definition of the situation, ritual observances become direct forms of social interaction between participants in a corporate life, and may thus possess social utility as well as social propriety. Ethics remains essentially related to religion and worship is comprehended as the celebration of the ultimate values of the total religious society on earth and in the heavens. This viewpoint crowns worship as the supreme function of the church even from a naturalistic standpoint.

It is further proposed in this paper to approach problems of the community and the church concretely. An attempt will be made to keep throughout the sense of the variety of shared experience suggested in the introductory para-

graphs and to maintain clear consciousness of the specific situations out of which the concepts "community" and "church" have been built up. Its descriptive phases will deal exclusively with the United States, leaving it to others to judge how far its consequent generalizations may apply to the modern world as a whole. At the outset, therefore, it will be concerned with church and communities rather than with the church and the community. Throughout, it will try to keep abstract notions in the closest possible contact with social realities.

After a sketch of the stages of church history in the United States, comes an exploration of some of the more obvious aspects of the relations of the American national community as a whole toward the church, especially the Protestant church considered as a single entity, one of the great associations of our times.

The paper then proceeds to follow the evolving relations of the more primary and authentic communities, the rural neighborhoods, towns, and cities, with their respective churches. It leaves to other hands the more ambitious task of theorizing concerning the relations of a logical or imaginative model of an ecumenical church with the supercommunity of Western Christendom and its missionary provinces, or of a possible church universal with a final world order of human society.

1. More General Relations of the Church to the American National Community

This broad field of relationship is now to be explored briefly in four sections as follows: (1) the history of the church in the United States; (2) the current status of the church; (3) the religious self-classification of the population and their adherence to the organized church; and (4) the prevalence, content, and quality of popular religion.

In all these aspects the churches collectively are treated under the form of the church related to a corresponding inclusive collectivity, the national social group or society.

The obvious epochs of the church's history in the United States are those of the life of the nation itself.

The local colonial Churches had originated as definitely communal institutions. They became the religious establishments of the incipient states. As voluntary organizations they had ceased to be successful.

At the end of the American colonial period probably less than five per cent of the population belonged actively to the church.[2] Historians offer many explanations of this low state of religion after a hundred and fifty years. They are generally unconvincing.

Its profounder explanation is probably to be found in the incongruous variety of elements entering into the makeup of most colonial settlements and their preoccupation with the struggle to make a living in a new world. For one colonial community founded by a homogeneous religious group, ten were composed of heterogeneous, conflicting, and often cantankerous elements. A majority of the population was not in harmony with state-established and supported churches prevailing in the majority of colonies up to the Revolutionary War. Minority sects maintained their own churches, but at a feeble level. The best that all religious forces combined could do, under the communal traditions of religion, for four million people, amounted to some three thousand local churches of about thirty denominations, to which not one person in twenty gave active adherence.

The next fifty years — the early national period — tripled the proportion of enrolled church members in the United States, but registered great cultural losses for or-

[2] Sweet, *Story of Religions in America* (New York, 1930), pp. 322 f.

ganized religion. Every aspect of life of the infant nation showed a tremendous release of new energies under stimulus of opportunity for the common man. Their energies reached an all-time climax in the epic of westward expansion. Home, school, and church became cultural focuses of a new civilization rapidly forming behind the frontier. Church support on a purely voluntary basis, which required membership to be individually recruited, church extension and church building became characteristic features of communal and national enterprise. Under decentralized lay initiative, with the backing of organized denominational missionary impetus, the church drove ahead. But its frontier expression was exceedingly crude. Standards of ministerial education became terribly debased. Revivalism triumphed over the colonial church tradition and flourished as the accepted means of religious progress for a hundred years. Despite multiplying sectarian differences, it created a common Protestant intellectual and emotional type. The church had learned how to succeed under conditions of the newly emerging farm and village culture. Some twenty-five thousand churches of seventy-five denominations had been founded by 1835.

The succeeding century was one of institutional progress for the American church, which has been continuous to the present day. The church has successfully kept up momentum and utilized techniques developed in the previous fifty years. Later coming immigrant populations of all races found it relatively easy to build on foundations laid by pioneers. They have escaped the bare-handed struggle with the wilderness without major tools of civilization, and were able to transplant their respective religious cultures with less change or impoverishment than firstcomers could. Now immigrants have rapidly reinforced the religious resources of the nation. By 1890 the nation had a hundred

sixty-five thousand churches (the Protestant denominations particularly having greatly overshot the mark in creating small local organizations) and 25 per cent of the population was voluntarily enrolled in their membership.

But the end of the farm and village era was at hand. The urbanization of the nation came rapidly on. In spite of its tremendous tensions, however, religious enterprise had only to persist in order to keep up with national growth. It was now easier to conserve gains. Heretofore all energies had been bent to foundation building; now there was some surplus of energy to go into improved quality of church life. The church became qualitatively more adequate for its task than ever before.

It is hard, sometimes, to realize that the church in the United States is now at its numerical peak. During the first third of the twentieth century a higher ratio of church members to population was reached than ever before. Now over 50 per cent of the people have enrolled themselves in its ranks — ten times the ratio which existed at the beginning of the nation. Membership has maintained itself substantially at this level for the last three decades. Gains in financial resources and property have been even more spectacular. Historically speaking, according to these more external indices at least, the church is revealed as a progressive and relatively successful institution, which is now to be considered in some of its contemporary phases.

One of the obviously important phases concerns the current rate of the church's growth. Ten years away, as the present year is, from the last government census of religious bodies, some uncertainty attaches to this point. However, the religious statisticians are doing their best to reach a dependable judgment by use of denominational returns pieced out by estimates. They believed that as of January 1, 1934, the church membership of the United States stood

at about 60,812,000, this representing an average gain of one and one-sixth per cent per year for a seven-year period. Population is estimated as having grown at the rate of one per cent per year for this period, so that the church was apparently considerably more than keeping up even during the depression or, as some think, rapidly growing partly on account of it.

Another highly significant phase of the church's current situation is its improved capacity for the conservation of adherents. The declining birth rate gives the church fewer children of its own to draw on. Yet the increase in church membership is now keeping up with or exceeding the growth of population. Growth under these circumstances can only be accounted for either by greater evangelizing energy or by greater success in conservation. It is known that the evangelistic index — the number of converts per year per thousand church members — has somewhat declined. This leaves conservation to explain growth. In spite of the extraordinary present mobility of the American population, both rural and urban, the present losses to the church from social change are undoubtedly less than those which accompanied the still vaster shifting of populations numbering millions from the Old World to the New, and from settled colonial areas to the frontier during the first two and a half centuries of American history.

Contradicting this apparent demonstration of the church's ability to stand up against the community's changes, one knows that when change is really acute, a church's growth and property are vitally determined by the social fortunes of the locality with which it is associated even in an attenuated sense. Dr. Ross Sanderson has proved this statistically for about two thousand churches in sixteen American cities by painstakingly comparing the social quality and trends of the neighborhoods with the

growth of the churches for a decade in membership, Sunday school, and financial support. The exceptions found were not real exceptions — most of them proved the rule — and neither piety nor wit could make the result otherwise.

Similar evidence of this is found on a nation-wide scale. The seven most religious states in the union, as measured by the proportion of the population in church membership, have gathered on the average 73 per cent of their adult population into the church rolls; the seven least religious (by this same criterion) only 30 per cent. How comes it that one group of states is nearly two and a half times as much addicted to church membership as another? No one in his senses would maintain that there is any such degree of discrepancy in Christian belief or ethical conduct. The examination of statistical correlations, one after another, between church membership and a wide range of social factors, clears up the mystery. The population of the seven most religious states grew less than 40 per cent during the thirty-year period 1900–1930, and only 12.5 per cent of the total was born outside of the state of residence. The seven least religious states increased their population three times as fast during the same period and one-half of their total was born outside of the state of residence. The more slow-growing, stay-at-home a population, the more religious; the faster-growing and more heterogeneous, the less religious. All the rest of the states have many members in proportion as they were slow and steady, few in proportion as they are progressive and mobile. It is a matter of the degree and rapidity of social change and the resulting composition of population.

Nothing, perhaps, comes nearer to being a law of corporately organized religion than that there will always be a lag between the institutional progress of the church and

the more acute processes of social change. The church cannot immediately catch up when the tempo of change is too rapid, or its movement too great. The out-working of this law largely defines the gross relations of church and national community as a contemporary situation.

The outstanding initial impression which one gets of the church when it is viewed locally on one-at-a-time glimpses, is that of the various grades and varieties of the adherence groupings which it represents. Attempting to carry out measurement in the basic terms of membership, one comes upon the fact that church membership constitutes by no means a simple concept.

The typical church maintains a local roll of members. The turned-over corner of a card may distinguish the active from the inactive, and a blue pencil mark the resident from the nonresident. Someone in the church will have a list of Sunday school pupils, and this list may or may not show which of them are church members. Various membership lists of subsidiary organizations, societies, and clubs will be found in the hands of their respective officers, but are assembled as one list. The financial authorities of the church will have their subscription list and roll of other supporters. The frequency of attendance of individuals will rarely be recorded, and there will be little agreement as to what constitutes regularity. The church can give some fairly definite account of its "regular" attendance, but what constitutes regularity?

Again, some of the listings of memberships are obviously those of determinate adherents, that is to say, persons whose relationship to the church is specifically defined as identification with this or that organization or activity. They define certain more or less permanent groups which together constitute the nucleus of the church. Other listings are of indeterminate adherents, persons with whom the

church feels some tie without being able to give a uniform reason for the feeling. Some denominations count baptized children as church members; all recognize younger minors as in some sense identified with the religious status of their parents. Churches which emphasize the rite of confirmation try to exercise recognized responsibility for all confirmed persons in their parishes. Others identify an all-defined group of "persons under pastoral care." As church programs develop, sponsored groups appear — for example, Boy Scouts or various clubs — which are in the church rather than of it. Still another type of adherence is represented by the church's clients and dependents, persons to whom it more or less statedly brings charitable or other assistance but with whom it may have no other tie.

As the sum of all these relationships the church has become widely diffused throughout the community. As it has diffused, the closeness and the significance of the *average* relationship has dwindled. The actual identification with his church of the average determinate adherent to his church in country, town, or city is relatively slight. An urban church which offers a person of a given age or sex from six to a dozen possible ways of being connected with it — for example, by church membership, Sunday school enrolment, regularity of attendance, pledged financial support, membership in this and that subsidiary organization — still finds that *a round half of its members belong to it in only one* of these capacities and that his *participation in that one is irregular.* About *one-fourth* have two connections and only one-fourth more than two. Children naturally form the larger proportion of one-connection adherents. Adolescents, on the contrary, lead in proportion of cases of from three to five connections with the church.

No generally accepted definition of regular attendance

exists. Six large city churches, with aggregate constituencies of eleven thousand, five hundred persons, claimed only 21 per cent even of their full members as regular attendants at services. In the case of fourteen hundred Congregational churches, which kept records on a seven-year period previous to 1936, the recorded figure was 25 per cent.

It must also be recalled that many of these dangling adherents are not communicant members at all. On an extensive sampling, involving 46,726 determinate adherents of twenty-six large city churches, only 57 per cent of the total was represented by full church membership. Some of the subsidiary organizations to which the others belong may indeed be little more than the essentially extraneous groupings of all but nonadherent persons. Their relationship to the church is so remote and tenuous as hardly to count at all religiously, unless some magic is ascribed to the mere act of belonging to any sort of church organization.

At the other extreme one finds from five to seven per cent of the adherents of a group of rather highly organized churches who have five or more determinate attachments to them. These much-connected people include the church's genuine and responsible "pillars," but are even more apt to be composed of religious hangers-on — persons deficient in other human relationships who find the church the easiest sphere for the repeated expression of their personalities.

Formal church membership accounts for the 56 per cent of the nation's population above thirteen years of age. What of the other 44 per cent? A good many of them — no one knows just how many — are the secondary members and indeterminate adherents just described.

But beyond the furthermost boundaries of the church's records or knowledge fall multitudes of persons unknown

to any church who, nevertheless, cherish their own private sense of adherence to some sort of religion. However little the church may value such nebulous ties — ties subjectively recognized but not publicly acted upon — it is of the highest importance for the understanding of modern societies to know that virtually everybody in the United States or Canada professes attachment to some religious faith and classifies himself accordingly. The Canadian government asks this question as a matter of course in its regular census, and only about one-half of one per cent of all Canadians are unable or unwilling to answer. In American cities also, whenever individuals have been interrogated by the tens of thousands, as they have been in house-to-house canvasses, scarcely anyone is to be found unwilling to declare himself either a Protestant, a Catholic, a Jew.

Furthermore, nearly all Protestants identify themselves as having an inner attachment or preference for some particular sect or denomination. In the extensive Springfield, Massachusetts, survey, for example, only one-tenth of the Protestants did not know what particular denomination they preferred. In other words, there is not only universal attachment to a particular faith, but an almost equally widespread acknowledgment of particular sectarian antecedents and leanings.

These more indeterminate adherents are not now, by their personal behavior, in active or acknowledged connection with the church. Yet toward all, together with adults belonging to the families of active members, the church extends at least a diluted sense of responsibility and offers a range of service which is more or less clearly responded to by the persons concerned.

Any complete account of the church as an association must obviously include both the central and the marginal type of adherents. It must determine how far the ties of

association actually react, and consider how far beyond all versions of deliberate association population may be related to the church on a communal level.

For the United States in general, no figures exist to show how wide is the margin between the total number of persons listed by all the churches put together (either as determinate or as indeterminate adherents) and the total population which classifies itself according to faith and sect. While, however, the United Church of Canada reports some one million, six hundred thousand persons under pastoral care, over two million report themselves as conscious adherents of that church — a fifth more than the church knows about. Typical city surveys in the United States would place this marginal group at the equivalent of 25 per cent of enrolled memberships. Finally, even beyond this marginal group, in Canada three times as many persons on the average report themselves as church adherents, at least in the classificatory sense, to particular faiths as all the churches combined record as full communicant members. Such a ratio applied to the Protestants in the United States would identify virtually the entire population as adherent in some sense to some religious group.

When one makes an actual close examination of any total population, the actual characteristics of Protestant nonadherents, as proved by numerous surveys, turn out to be the following: First they consist of transient elements of population or people with corresponding mental attitudes. Thus, in a virtually complete survey of a suburb of fourteen thousand people, about one-third of the Protestant unchurched was found to consist of school teachers, domestic servants and industrial workers living in boardinghouses. Without deep roots in the community, such groups are hard to combine with normal family constituents of the average residential church.

When the transient nonadherents are subtracted, a re-

siduum is left, possibly including two-thirds of the Protestant unchurched, which, in social characteristics, differs in no essential particular from the churched population, except that the individuals composing the group are somewhat older in years and on the whole poorer. One immediate common-sense hypothesis is that the relative lack of small children in this group may, perhaps, explain its failure to keep in touch with the church. The financial burden of membership may also be a factor.

In this particular case, the entire body of Protestant ministers was assembled and confronted with the residuary list. One minister would begin to say to another that he had always understood that this or that family in question belonged to the other's church, and had not felt at liberty to approach it for fear of being charged with proselytizing. A limited house-to-house canvass in this connection confirmed the reputation of many such persons. Their neighbors credited them with possessing some religious leaning or shadowy affiliation with some particular church. They were nevertheless outside of the most generous version of the church's own adherent lists.

Now people displaced from normal relations by reason of social transiency, or whose energies are waning by reason of age or discouragement, drop out of other relations besides those of the church. Many a life is lived in the sense of values carried over from the past after the particular ties by which values were actively established have vanished. But may not then large numbers of the unchurched represent the church's alumni — " old boys " out of school but retaining real sentimental attachment to the church of their youth?

From a purely objective standpoint, and as viewed realistically and in detachment by the student of society, it is obvious that all the relationships taken together make up

the actual grouping and association which must be recognized as the church.

What significance each of these ways of adhering has, how they are related to one another, and in what sense they may combine into a single picture of nearer or remoter attachment to an institution which is religious as well as social, one has to discover by further painstaking exploration. Do they find their unity in a time sequence, in the sense that the individual's typical course is to come first to a remoter church relationship, then be brought into closer and closer ones, and then to fall out of more active participation, largely because of age and general inelasticity? Does the body of indeterminate adherents constitute a reservoir from which determinate adherents, so to speak, are ladled out? Does one go from the Sunday school into the church and progress from occasional attendance into regularity? In this sense, many of the unchurched constitute the church's future membership which will come along in time, as well as to alumni whose loyalties are dimmed but not quenched.

An additional feature of the situation, made crucial by certain denominations, is that multitudes of such persons return to the church in the important crises of life and look to the church in the last extremity. Birth, marriage, and death return them to its sacraments. Under urban conditions churches which maintain open offices for consultation or programs offering varied forms of social service will be sought out by many of these unchurched as casual or intermittent clients. Such occasional attachments need not be wholly without positive significance even when from the church's standpoint they seem remote, selfish, parasitic, and onesided.

To sum up the whole matter: nonadherents include a scant few of professedly irreligious persons but represent

in the main persons who definitely think of themselves as related to the church, who stand subjectively so near to the institution that they differ but little from the majority of determinate adherents — adherents whose connection is characteristically tenuous and whose participation is intermittent. In other words, the unchurched constitute one-half of a normal distribution curve covering a total population, the middle case of which is represented by an adherent to the church by one connection, but who is not regular either in participation or in support. As closeness of attachment to the church increases, the number of adherents diminishes, the series ending with a few who are bound to the church by many ties to balance the few definitely irreligious at the other end of the scale.

All these diverse adherent groupings constitute ways of associating through the church, and each has its own significance. Regarding the church religiously as an organ of salvation, one may puzzle as to just which one establishes the crucial saving relationship to God. Protestantism, however, laying as it does only secondary stress on membership in the external institution, ought to be in a position to deal with these phenomena of adherent and nonadherent association in a frank and illuminating way. They show that the church has values for wide constituencies which lack intimate and permanent ties with it. For all of them, the association actually functions in some measure. Some of these constituents represented attitudes which are essentially reversions to the communal level of religion. Without being deceived as to the trivial spiritual significance of some of these ties, one need not despise the least of them. From the sociological standpoint at least, this series of increasing and decreasing attachments is an essential feature of the church's place in society.

Now not only do most Americans cherish attitudes

which relate them, whether actively or passively, to the church as an institution; they also share the common conceptions of religious belief and conduct for which the church is presumed to stand.

Religion, when it is privately held along with attitudes highly critical of the church, accepts a creed and a code closely reflecting the church's own.

The characteristics of this popular private religion are well known. The extensive, first-hand, and terribly disillusionizing and chastening studies of the religion of American soldiers during the World War closely paralleled the results of studies in the British army. These all too quickly forgotten data, along with repeated questionnaires and surveys, reveal that the masses of men in the American population are generally religious in an inarticulate way. They hold a shadowy faith in God and immortality; they respect the good but in their view unpractical Jesus, about whom they actually know almost nothing. Almost to the last man they pray in an emergency. They almost totally lack the concept of salvation from sin or the sense of the personal need of it.

As soldiers, these men, the strength of the generation now in middle life, were full of denunciation of the church, with which the majority were not actively associated. It was attacked for coming so short of its proclaimed ideal, for its trivial external requirements and its unrelatedness to living problems.

Yet nearly all of these soldiers under the draft representing a true cross section of the population, confessed to having been under some sort of religious influence in childhood; and they still regarded it as their prerogative "to claim the functions of priest or clergyman in connection with a wedding or death." [3]

[3] *Religion among American Men*, p. 31.

Here, then, is the actual religion of American men, mostly Protestants, consisting of three elements:

(1) A private religion, such inner reality as it has being essentially independent of attachment to the organized church.

(2) A characteristic criticism of the church as impractical, and as ineffective in behalf of its primary interest.

(3) A one-way claim, that of the individual upon the church at the communal level, which birth into the Christian community is assumed to convey.

Such is popular religion as accepted by the unchurched American masses. Only by accommodation may it be called Christian. Yet in point of fact it is very much of a piece with the religion of the masses within the church. Theirs, too, bears all the typical marks — a private, inward-looking religion regarded as "vital"; a very dangling adherence, as measured by active participation in the church as an institution; this coupled with rather acute criticism of the church's shortcomings; in spite of which there is a very general resort to the viewpoint and offices of the church at the critical points in life.

In short, the church turns out to be Protestantism's whipping-boy, on whom all resentments over the failures of private religion tend to be visited, even when the essential significance of the church in the realm of religion has been denied.

Yet, even as American rather than in any clear-cut sense Christian, popular Protestantism does contribute strong backing to the role of the church in the community. It operates at a low level, but it does serve. Americans are enterprising; Americans are melioristic and willing to make something of any possible situation; Americans believe in progress. As enterprising they keep backing the church practically, within reason. They do try to improve it.

Generally uncritical, they tend to evade most of its acute problems by the distinction between essentials and non-essentials. Essentials turn out to be the considerably attenuated religious notions to which most Americans assent. But even on this basis, a vast deal of piecemeal "progress" is possible. On the score of identity of viewpoint and doctrine very large segments of the American Protestant churches could be "united" at this level.

Far enough away as they are from any sharply distinctive version of Christianity or any adequate conception of the genius of the more authentic religious processes, these contributions of popular religion stand as solid advantages and must be reckoned within any realistic understanding of the church's contemporary situation.

What exactly is "religion" in the popular version? As it appears in the data just presented, it is an area whose direction and magnitude are sensed rather than bounded, of which the following are characteristic features: (1) Certain attitudes and appreciations drawn out into moods and sentiments as related to the awe-inspiring, the universally meaningful, and the holy. (2) It involves common symbols and observances, the mores of the religious tradition. (3) It includes beliefs, more or less explicitly and systematically set forth in creed and code. (4) It eventuates in practical interests of the church at work. In brief, "true religion" is identified by certain emotional status, a certain ideology and certain behavior, partly conventional, partly of immediate social utility.

American "Christians" reinforce and validate these elements of "the religious" by sensitiveness to values implying rather numerous frames of reference. Some of the accepted values of popular religion are inward-looking, others outward-reaching; some are mystical, others rationalistic; some definitely theistic in frame of reference, others

humanistic. Many derive from the general stream of religion in the life of humanity; others are specifically and historically Christian. Sectarian affirmations and denials give a certain variety to the emphasis which one or another of these points of value gets; but the essential balance is maintained by the great majority of American church members and the unchurched alike. Any combination of emphasis preserving the customary elements in something like their customary balance passes as " Christian " and indeed as " evangelical " in most American religious circles. This is the somewhat undiscriminating catholicity of popular religion as deeply possessed by the national community.

Can any tentative conclusion now be drawn from the tracing of the church in the history of the American community, from its place in the contemporary scene, and from the phenomena of adherence and popular belief which have just been reviewed?

Obviously, the American church is no longer a collection of sects, essentially separated from and at war with society. Indeed, it has become a segment of society, quite like the rest. Still less in the persons of its individual members is it a collection of saints, that is, of individuals inwardly distinguishable from the mass by a unique faith or by the peculiar graces of Christian character. This conclusion, perhaps, serves only to clothe the situation with fresh doubts and perplexities. However, an honest attempt has been made to present the pertinent phenomena. Further analysis may succeed in reaching more penetrating and orderly results.

2. AMERICAN COMMUNITIES AND THEIR CHURCHES

In an attempt to trace the major specific correspondences between American communities and their churches, a start has already been made with the simplest type of community, the neighborhood.

From the standpoint of social complexity the hierarchy of communities is obvious. Life as led by near neighbors in a hamlet is essentially conditioned at more points by social relations than life in the lone farmstead. The town, with its temporarily crowded main street at the hour of marketing or movies, strikingly contrasts with the hamlet. Again, the small city with its factories and possible single skyscraper stands in radical contrast with the town. Above all looms the big city. At any point up or down the scale, a doubling or trebling of population makes a more than appreciable difference, not alone in the externals of life: each strikes a new note in civilization.

When it becomes necessary to ignore intermediate gradations, and to comprehend the entire range of structural forms of civilization as they are presented in communities from smallest to largest, popular usage distinguishes three grades: country, town, and city. Those are the primary colors in which civilization inclines to paint all its pictures.

Each of the three grades has developed a corresponding type of church, reflecting the outworking of the same forces which have made the communities themselves different.

Comprehending all three grades of communities is the nation, itself a community of a superior order, with which the preceding section has already concerned itself. The nation, in turn, is part of a somewhat vague culture-area community, and ultimately of a practically nebulous but ideally all-embracing world community.

The neighborhood and its church have been described by anticipation in the introduction section. What remains to be noted is the marked decline of the American neighborhood in connection with a recent radical change in the pattern of rural society.

Since 1910, the approximate beginning of the age of the automobile, the focus of rural America has conspicuously

shifted from the neighborhood to the village and town functioning as a service station for the outlying farms. Formerly a neighborhood meant the group of farm neighbors whose life has already been illustrated, each group typically provided with its country store, its school, its church, often its grange or lodge. These communal institutions have been transferred to the town, one by one, sometimes one going first, sometimes another. The neighborhood farm group is left with depleted social resources. This process has been going on with acute rapidity throughout rural America. Such is the concrete reality behind the phrase, " the breakdown of the neighborhood."

It is chiefly the breakdown of the neighborhood which explains the death in recent years, in carefully surveyed representative areas of the United States, of from two to four per cent of all rural churches per year, to a total of perhaps a thousand to fifteen hundred per year the country over.

Now the life of the neighborhood and its church looked back in the direction of a far simpler face-to-face grouping, namely, that of the primitive clan-village. Here was found the original form of permanent human grouping, that based on blood relationship without differentiation of interests.

In their recent study of American neighborhoods, Brunner and Kolb [4] sought to find out under what auspices each habitual type of social event or gathering was held. A characteristic reply was: " It's hard to tell just which events are the grange's. Everything is all together here. All the events are really community events." This lack of clear distinction between auspices merely runs the story of the primary rural group in reverse, back to a stage in the development of society when all the specialized tendencies rep-

[4] *Recent Social Trends* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1933).

resented in the modern world by separate institutional structures still remained in solution. None of the great associations or major institutions of society have as yet found separate existence. Government and education, like religion, were relatively indistinguishable functions of the whole community life and there was little economic specialization.

This may be termed (1) the stage of *communal customs* — the fusion of political-economic-familial-religious cultural usages. The scheme of social differentiation, following this line of analysis, is marked by two other stages: (2) Differentiated communal institutions — the distinctive forms of each becoming relatively fixed and embodied in; and (3) differentiated associations — the family, the state, economic corporations, school, church, etc., arriving at full-fledged separate development.

Now, up to the beginning of the present century, the American neighborhood remained essentially in the second of these stages; many times temporarily lapsing back into the first — as witness the pioneer patriarchal household, the frontier Sunday school in lay hands, lynch law, and limited economic barter in connection with essentially subsistence farming. At all these points one sees the situation under the control of reversions to communal custom and processes.

By contrast, the spectacular reorganization of rural life around town centers, chiefly accomplished in the United States within a generation, represents an unprecedented speeding up of social evolution in the direction of full differentiation of social interests and their institutions; that is to say, their emergence into the third of the stages enumerated above.

This change shows itself in many ways. Town and village communities, for example, have relatively more stores

in them now than in 1910 or 1920, and more kinds of stores; and a higher proportion of their population is engaged in merchandising. These facts indicate they are getting more farmer trade than formerly. Again, the proportion of farm youth in town and village high schools has been growing by leaps and bounds, regardless of whether or not school districts have been consolidated. Village social organizations, such as the luncheon clubs, musical groups, parent-teacher associations, and many others, now freely welcome farmers and their wives as members. Indeed, more than one-third of the membership of such village groups have come to be made up of open-country people. Ill-will and misunderstanding between village and country is far less in evidence today than in 1924 or even 1929. Active and continuing cooperation is frequent. In short, the rural community of today is a village or town centered one; literally, a town-country or " rurban " community. Neighborhoods, when they still exist, are assuming more fragmentary and less important functions.

What meaning has such change for the church? First, that more people have shifted their church allegiances as well as their economic and social ones. In 1920, according to a nation-wide sampling of rural communities, less than one-fourth of the members of village churches, and barely one in twenty of those in towns of twenty-five hundred to ten thousand populations, came from the open country. By 1930 the proportion was well over one-third in the case of the village and nearly one in four in the town churches. In some counties more than half the members of village and even of town churches now came from farm homes. This shifting of the center of church interests on the part of so many rural people from open country or neighborhood to village or town has weakened greatly the church in the country; and disproportionately so because it is

the more competent and often wealthier members who incline to leave it for the church at the center. Very often it has moved the church itself, and relocated it on the edge of the growing town, to which it remains alien, rural in spirit, bowing in the house of the town Baal under compulsion only. Their struggle to get and to retain members has brought the churches, even though of the same denominations, newly into acute competition. It largely explains the heavy mortality of rural churches, already noted.

But the decisive quality of the changes just described has not yet been adequately sensed. These external social changes get epochal meaning for the neighborhood church because they compel inward changes. Specifically, for the country they have involved a new principle of human association; while for the town they have greatly complicated an old one.

To understand the significance of what has happened, one must consider that the relationships of the rural community from the earlier social beginnings had concerned the same people over and over again. There were numerous regroupings, but the basic personnel of the community did not change. The back-door or barnyard conversations and borrowings, meetings, and passings on the country road or village street, trade in the shops, social functions and occasions, organized life in school, lodge, and church, all recombined the same familiar faces in different connections. Marriage, occupation, economic opportunity, and everyday working philosophy, all had to be achieved within the limits of a few score of families, including a hundred or two persons.

Suddenly now within the last quarter of a century, by means of improved transportation and the regrouping of rural population, the average rural person has had opened to him a wider range of human association than the

countryman or village man has ever had since society became human, or at least since primitive hordes ceased to practice exogamy.

Still more dramatic and tense has been the complex of urban social change focused in the great city. Not only does the city grow enormously but it grows according to an invariable pattern — by territorial expansion at the circumference, by crowding and tall building at the center. Each element of urban activity competes with the others for space. The enlarged business and industrial areas crowd out residences. The generally poor and often foreign colonies clustered about these centers are consequently thrust out into contiguous residential territory of higher economic quality. This invasion drives before it the former inhabitants who scatter among the yet better areas, adding to them, deteriorating them, and in turn evicting the previous populations, who ultimately take to the suburbs. Thus a given area sees a succession of populations, perhaps also of nationalities and races. The palace of today is the slum of tomorrow. A " Furnished Rooms for Rent " sign ornaments the old Rockefeller homestead in Cleveland. Slum clearance and high-grade apartment house developments set up a counter movement in a few areas. But except as checked by zoning ordinances and partially stabilized by city planning, these successive waves of deterioration, initiated by displacements at the center and the obsolescence of the city's older housing and facilities, tend to roll on and on. The mass of these movements is, of course, determined by the size of the city, and their violence is proportionate to its rate of growth.

Within this continuously moving framework, the mingling day after day of many diverse elements tends to obscure the permanent siftings of population. By and large, however, each district of the city ultimately comes to have

its peculiar use and place in the pattern at any given moment, and every inhabited area comes to represent a distinct social and economic level of population. It is stabilized temporarily, but on a mere basis of economic sifting, which furnishes no genuine basis for human association.

For the continuous process of the remaking of cities is even more profoundly social than it is physical. Recurrently driving him to new places of residence by the rapidity and violence of its changes, full-blown urbanization tends to give the adult city or suburban dweller a different set of fellows for every major relationship. The people near whom he lives are not those with whom he works, and when he plays it is with a still different group. Vocational and business specialization bring the individual into still other groupings: the trade, the profession, the group of fellow workers. Special cultural interests or avocations place him in the literary, the artistic, or the musical crowd. Recreation, sports and hobbies may each create an additional set of associations. All of these separate groups of associates are acquainted with the man in only a fragment of his life. Of the rest of him they remain ignorant. He has manifold ties in many directions, but all relatively superficial. These associations are based on selective affinity rather than on contiguity in a self-contained neighborhood or upon the deeper ties of the racial group or family clan which originally caused people to settle near together.

The siftings of city population into socially homogeneous areas consequently do not create new neighborhoods, because the principle of neighborly association has departed from the situation.

Finally, corresponding to these changes in terms of secular association, the fellowship of the urban church, as

evidenced by the typically slender affiliation of its average adherent, tends to be reduced to merely one of the many ties which persons detached from locality and, in great numbers, detached also from family, recognize with segments of their personalities. Each segment expresses itself in a different setting and as a response to a different set of people and moral standards. This segmentation of culture and substitution of multiple moral standards for a single standard is the essence of urbanization. Such extreme urbanization conspicuously dominates the associated life of many large downtown churches and confronts corporate religion with a task of integration and discipline the like of which it has never before had to tackle in all its history.

The churches now come to owe their very existence to the abandonment of neighborly religious relationships. More and more people turn away from their neighborhoods of residence to attend church at a distance. The urban situation exaggerates this tendency to the extent that, in numerous carefully surveyed instances, half or more of all church adherents are found attending church and finding religious fellowship outside of the areas contiguous to their homes, away from the neighborhood where their smaller children go to school, where their wives patronize the corner grocery, and where their fellow citizens gather at the voting precinct. In the extreme case, not more than two or three per cent of a church's constituency may live within a mile of it. Most city churches, however, retain some vestige of territorial parishes; the majority of their adherents are somewhat clustered about them, though in the most typical cases so diluted in actual numbers that the church can have only the loosest community roots. Sunday school and subsidiary constituencies are more often drawn from contiguous areas than from general

church memberships. But different constituencies may not only come from different distances but from quite different directions — the Sunday school from one sector of the city, the chief membership from another. In short, many urban churches have not single but multiple constituencies. Even in the most homogeneous of residential neighborhoods, where social life within the contiguous group is most adequate, half of all churchgoers may be found marching out from under the very eaves of local sanctuaries, including those of their own denominations, to find church fellowships at distant centers. In extreme cases, almost the whole body of churchgoers of a locality thus take themselves out of their immediate neighborhoods to get to church. This indicates real maladjustment. However, for half of the people of a neighborhood to go elsewhere to church has become only normal in many American cities. It may fairly be charged to the free and perhaps proper exercise of selective choice under urban conditions. The urban church thus is caught in a most complex and perplexing situation, whose factors must be further disentangled before the situation can be understood or in any way controlled.

Made up as it is of people of such characteristics, no wonder that the church as an institution takes on corresponding behaviors. Most of its sense of specific territorial responsibility dwindles away. If it remains attached to locality, it is for its own sake, not for the sake of the community.

In areas of rapid urban change, where old populations are being evicted, five general possibilities are open to the existing churches: (1) to die because of the diminished number of nearby adherents of the sort which the church formerly reflected; (2) to survive as churches of stranded minorities, which obviously will be able to maintain but

few; (3) to move along to another location near to the type of population for which it has established affinity; (4) to adapt itself to meeting the special needs of some element in the incoming population and thus to rebuild the old institution out of fresh but fragmentary materials; or (5) to maintain its location and draw adherents of the old sort from a distance. Only removal ordinarily permits a church to find a relatively homogeneous area in which it can reflect total community characteristics somewhat as the original parish church did; and here it will almost certainly have to divide the advantage with rival churches. Considerable numbers of churches actually follow each of these alternatives. The story of urban church fortunes is dramatic as well as instructive. In typical cities one-fourth of all Protestant churches which ever existed have died. Most of the stranded ones live on only at a "poor dying rate." Especially interesting and thrilling is the history in typical cities of removals and attempted adaptations to changed communities.

On the evidence of a thousand cases, three out of every four city churches do not continue upon the original cornerstone. They have moved at least once in their histories. Colonies of churches — often leaders of their respective denominations — have been neighbors and rivals in three or four different locations — each moving to the "best" new territory every time its old territory went bad. Many of the abandoned church buildings were sold to churches of the incoming populations, some of which were of the same denomination, but of other race or social level.

Time does not permit the tracing of this process in further detail. It is obvious, however, that none of the possibilities open to the urban church under the pressure of change prompt it to be continuously a community institution in the sense that the neighborhood church was. All

roads lead away from the close communal identification of the one with the other.

At best, however, the process is incomplete. The situation in all rapidly changing urban areas is muddled by the presence, in addition to the characteristic population of the moment, of stranded elements of departing populations and by the advance guard of populations still to come. This is especially the case, because population invasions take place along major transit routes, leaving a little off their routes eddies and pockets where the life of former days persists. In brief, areas in transition cannot be truly homogeneous in spite of their distinctly marked average levels. Many of the churches of a given locality accordingly represent mere fragments of populations. They were once churches of the community but that community has moved out from under them.

In this group, too, are found the new enterprises, but born too late, with no understanding of the world into which they have come. Others are old and decrepit cases in which functions previously performed have been gradually lost as an old man loses his faculties. Careful studies have traced in detail the progressive narrowing of programs of waning churches which find it impossible to keep up with the changes of their neighborhoods.

In the cases of these fragmentary urban churches the influence of especially cramping tradition has also to be recognized. Extreme dogmatism and austerity of outlook keep their influence within the narrowest bounds. Certain churches of foreign antecedents stand as monuments to the reactionary spirit. They do not, for example, give women the social freedom to which they are accustomed in American life. Consequently they fail to go along with the changing attitudes of the younger generation, which progressively abandons them.

In contrast, under conditions generally of relatively ample resources, a liberal or experimental intellectual outlook and an advantageous social environment, one finds the local urban church in complete theoretical harmony with the newly developing principle of association by selective affinity. A church of this type consciously elaborates its programs in response to the broadening and more fully differentiated cultural, social, and recreational interests of its varied groups of adherents. In its fullest development, it makes structural place for and tries to serve all the many-sided constructive expressions of life. In some loose sense it undertakes to organize these around a religious core; but it provides for their expression in many separate organizations through graded activities adapted to each particular age group and to the peculiar needs of the two sexes. Often these groups are quasi-independent and at no time have they much in common. In its actual organization, the church tends to subdivide the universe of the religious into independently numerous bits, each commanding a piecemeal attachment of some of the church's adherents, whose loyalties are to these attenuated secondary interests rather than to any closely knit whole. Such a situation obviously precludes any successful attempt to express the bond of the church's union in a common credal formulation. The things which, in the first instance, unite the majority of associates in the church are the often superficial claims of these subsidiary concerns. One is apt to join the church as Scout troop, as aid society, as men's club; not the church as church. The church is the opportunity for selective grouping on behalf of many things, rather than the common expression of the one supreme thing.

Finally, conditioned by situations combining sufficient resources (often furnished by agencies outside the immediate church group), by a nontraditional attitude, and by

the crying needs of an adverse special environment, a type of church appears in which an expanded interpretation of religion in organization and activity is made to reflect the special pressures of that environment. The result is a socially adapted church, definitely undertaking to become an agency of social ministry to especially handicapped populations. Such a church commonly maintains the traditional activities of the church at the center of the enterprise, but adds to indefinite degree such health, recreational, and economic aids as the especially needy types of population may require. Such churches furnish extreme examples of subsidiary groupings for many purposes with little sense of belonging to the church as a whole or to its central purposes. Their secular activities often far exceed in bulk their religious ones.

The church then, both rural and urban, is increasingly abandoning its former principle of association by communal contiguity and is increasingly basing itself, both in fellowship and in program, on selective affinity. Both are more and more dominated by a new inner principle of association very different from that which pertained when the same few men and women had all their common roots, political, economic, cultural, and religious, in a particular community. This shift is only slightly affected by the town church.

The basic social pattern of town life has suffered no such radical change as that of the open country and village neighborhood, or that of the great city. The gathering of rural people about it as a service center has merely provided material for somewhat ample relations of the sort it already had. True, the town is more changed in spirit than it is in structure, as part of the urbanization of society as a whole; but this registers as a loosening of old ties rather than as the introduction of a new principle of association.

The town church consequently remains the most successful relative to its population.

The villages and towns, especially in the distinctively agricultural areas, are proportionately almost twice as well evangelized as is the farming population. The twenty million people living in the villages and towns of the United States are unquestionably more unshaken in their traditional loyalty to the Protestant church than any other group. They retain more of the communal identification of church and community.

Pausing now for a brief review of the discussion up to this point, one may record somewhat as follows the first impression which the data tend to produce:

Profound changes in the basis of human association are working themselves out in modern communities and institutions, but not without many obstacles and crosscurrents. Evolution has made no complete break with the past, and it is not yet certain how the conflict of forces will eventuate.

By virtue of their distinctive environmental pressures, all types of communities create churches, superficially at least, in their own images, so that a list of such types constitutes a rough inventory of kinds of churches.

There are, for example, (1) the church of the open country with its decaying neighborhood; (2) the church of the town with its immediate hinterland representing distances over which increasing numbers of people go to the center but where many are not yet closely enough attached to the center to desire to go; (3) the church of the town itself enjoying new prestige and prosperity as the country's capital; (4) churches of the residential portions of cities, poor, middle class, and rich; (5) churches of the suburbs, industrial or residential. In addition to these, the outstanding types of specialized neighborhoods create corre-

sponding churches: (6) churches of apartment house sections; (7) of downtown centers; (8) of specialized types of areas, like foreign-speaking neighborhoods where peculiar populations are colonized; (9) student communities and the like.

At the same time in no average typical city do the majority of churches reflect the environmental type in any clear-cut fashion. Churches increasingly escape immediate environmental fashioning by reason of mobility and selective regrouping of population by special interests. The community to which the church most profoundly corresponds is some phase of the total inclusive political and cultural community, the nation, which comprehends local communities of all types.

At first sight, then, in the longer perspective and the more general national view, the correspondence between church and community appears to be better established and more complete than when viewed from the standpoint of the local churches and their respective varied communities. Change is less conspicuous. The stable character of the general situation, at a fairly low level, to be sure, impresses. The church is the church of the American people — authentically embedded in their culture, entrenched in popular feeling and belief, and profoundly related to the national life. It is from the standpoint of its local communities that the church chiefly appears as an unstable association — one which has suffered much buffeting about by social change and is doubtless destined to suffer more. Its adaptations to the current trend are incomplete and of doubtful adequacy. To be sure certain obvious gains from current changes are also manifest. Yet who can be wholly comfortable, in view of all the facts, as to what the future holds in store for the church?

3. SOCIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS

The two preceding sections have described some of the more pertinent objective relations of church and community as they appear, first, within the more inclusive community, the nation; and then in the primary community units, the neighborhoods, towns, and cities of the United States.

It is the purpose of this section to inquire into the significance of the facts discovered. The most obvious first step in this direction is to widen the horizon of inquiry. Other institutions exist side by side with the church within the nation and in the same communities. By consulting their experiences and those of the communities as they are changing with the evolution of their component elements (of which the church is one) one may discover how much they have in common.

Such a wider survey brings one directly into the domain of the social studies. Considerable use of their results has already been made in preceding sections. Now one comes to ask the direct question: How does the student of society interpret the phenomena concerned? Obviously, it is only his immediate conclusions which matter. These have to be turned over to the more ultimate judgment of religious persons for authentication or rejection. Religion has the final word in matters concerning itself.

Now, a survey of social tendencies throws very immediate light upon the case of the church in the modern world. It discovers a process running throughout modern society which is changing it generally from a set of communities to a set of associations. The new principle of human association which was earlier traced as affecting the church, affects equally all types of American institutions. It has broadened when it has not broken neighborhood

limits and freed human relations from the accident of contiguity. It has reconstituted, not the church alone, but a great variety of voluntary groups, out of slenderly attached persons without strong common roots. These it has drawn together, often from great distances, according to subtle selective affinities, to associate with one another with only a fraction of their personalities. The church's experience is thus of a piece with the general experience of modern society. The process has brought increasing proportions of people into voluntary participation in association enterprises (of which the church is but one) and has left the thus attenuated institutions numerically larger and qualitatively more varied than ever before.

The major significance of this set of differentiating changes comes to light when it is considered that all the separate social institutions are relatively of recent origin. Primitive society was like a worm which might be cut in two at any point, leaving segments which were substantially alike. "There is no separate organization of religion, still less of religions." Primitive society

> may have a fairly elaborate system of ceremonial offices and a more elaborate system of kin distinction than is characteristic of evolved society, but there are few groupings or categories under which for the practical purpose of cooperative living, the members fall. . . . To be a member of the kin is *ipso facto* to share the common and inclusive rights and obligations, the rituals, standards, and beliefs of the whole.[5]

With such anciently established origins, the social unity of primary communities is profoundly rooted in the essential nature of man as evolved through long ages. The common life of the tribe or clan is the primeval and natural expression of collective will. In contrast with such profound social ties, the separate associations of modern so-

[5] MacIver, *op. cit.*, p. 431.

cieties are merely afterthoughts, hasty constructions into which multitudes of individual wills are more or less deliberately drawn for quite limited purposes. This, it has been pointed out, gives the association a quasi-contractual character, as contrasted with community. It is relatively artificial, and is voluntary rather than inevitable. The primitive unity of community is still in considerable measure expressed in neighborhoods and villages. Cities, on the contrary, reflect an essentially associative type of society. All modern nations are moving in this direction. Association is supplanting community as the nucleating principle of society.

This transition is, perhaps, the crucial test of the plasticity of human nature. According to Spengler, human nature cannot successfully adapt itself to the degree of differentiation and specialization involved in city life. Urbanization accordingly bears the seeds of its own destruction.

In contrast, then, with community which implies a common focus for all of life, each association stands as an organized single purpose within life. Membership in an association is not co-extensive with the total population of the community. Rather a fraction of the population has directed its attention to this or that aspect of the previously shared life of the communal group, now isolated as an object of special concern. In behalf of this particular interest, rather than in behalf of life as a whole, it creates social structures and carries on specific functions. This means that each aspect selected for attention has to be separately evaluated as more or less important than the others. As a result of this evaluation any one of them may be dropped out entirely from one's scheme of living. No one is taken for granted as all of the functions of the primitive community are and have to be.

Again, the object of each association is limited. For what it is worth, more or less, men rally to it and life gets organized about it. It secures continuity of attention, not according to its accidental rating within the common tradition, but increasingly according to the contemporary strength of its value. As organized about such special interests, the life of society is controlled by more particular standards, and by more inward standards, ethically speaking, than those of the original community. The association is selective in the sense that there are ways of getting out of it. But one may also stay inside and criticize it. Its arrangements are not so fixed as those of communal society. This implies that the association marks a more plastic phase of social organization and potentially a more progressive. Finally, in contrast with the passivity of communal society, association is purposive; it is more or less clearly conscious of what interest it serves and it renders that interest a different and far more complex type of loyalty than that of habitual response to communal situations. In a word, the loyalties due to association are always compatible with questioning and change.

Now, society of the sort which has just been characterized has selected religion from among, and along with, others of the shared communal interests, has directed special attention toward it, and has given it differentiated development. Within the social process in its associative phase, the ends of religion thus come to be served more consciously and directly and with more particular loyalty than they ever were in primitive society. The church, to be sure, originated centuries ago as a differentiated communal institution. Its development was so epochal that Durkheim holds that what humanity had prior to it was not religion at all. Now, however, it is clearly coming to be a more highly differentiated association, and promises to

develop indefinitely further on this line. It is selecting a larger and ever larger number of particular aspects of the religious field for separate and special concern, evaluation and organization. The end of this process is by no means in sight.

Within such a situation, the church at any given time appears as simply one association among many in a society which ceased to be a closely integrated whole in any aspect, and has become a collection of separately organized and often conflicting interests. The church, to be sure, by reason of its vast number of adherents, its colossal institutional structure and prestige, is one of the great associations. But in spite of its magnitude, and its high private self-evaluation, its essential social character within the mundane sphere is not different from that of others.

What manner of unity can prevail in a society thus made up of separate and largely artificial associations of which the church is but one?

Obviously, the fundamental problem of any social order is how to harmonize unity and diversity, how to secure cooperative functioning among the unrelated if not conflicting groups and tendencies; how to bring them together under some integrating principle. Expressed in most general terms, the ultimate aim of any society must be to achieve enough unity to hold itself together, to maintain enough control to keep its members united rather than divided, while at the same time leaving certain room for freedom of action on their part.

Previous to the recent ominous rise of dictatorships modern societies as a rule did not desire the kind of unity that completely suppresses the identity of diverse parts. Neither, on the other hand, did one find in them a type of separation which prevented the unified action of the different members. Modern societies at least attempt to

maintain both unity and diversity, through a process of federating rather than obliterating parts within the whole. This federal principle inheres in and finds expression in the function and structure of the entire social order. The reference of the term is not limited to political relations. It applies equally to relations between local communities and the national communities, and between parts and wholes within voluntary associations. The local neighborhoods and church congregations, for example, with which this study began, are federated within the unity of the nation and of their respective denominations. And this is true of churches in a sociological sense, irrespective of their differences in ecclesiastical polity. Even if one does not go all the way with the federationists to make this the primary principle of social organization, the federative process is deeply rooted in the constitution of modern society.

Society, then, not merely has for its primary units numbers of associations, but the relationships which hold them together are federal in nature rather than strictly organic. For a social tie they depend upon accommodation and compromise, to harmonize mutually recognized complementary differences, each leaving room for the other to exercise itself with as much freedom as possible but without reference to any single dominant principle of integration.

In many respects the outworking of the social process shows striking capacity to secure order among diverse elements without preacknowledged unity of idea or external authority, by reason of a seemingly immanent and continuously emergent harmonizing principle. As the organ alike of all human potentialities and of actual life history of mankind, the course of events is forever bringing into being a social order whose essential form is that

of a unity in diversity. Many students of society simply accept the creative emergence of order into an infinitely tangled situation, in which no prior principle of order can be discerned, as something "given" which furnishes solid grounds for social expectancy — like the sun's rising. It is easy for religious minds to read in such a phenomenon the overruling providence of God. At the present crisis in human evolution, however, deeply disquieting questions arise. To what degree is the capacity of the social process to achieve order a hold-over of the power of primitive mores, controls which arose prior to social differentiation and which still for a time serve to keep life within its grooves and to give it a certain balance? What will happen when these controls become exhausted with the growth of the associative principle? All along, what some personalize as a satanic principle in society, and what others psychologize as its demonic element, has now and again gotten out of hand and tragically shown the limitations of the capacity of the social process to produce harmonious order. When differentiation has done its full work and the communal mores lack renewal of power, what shall hold society together? Lacking the presumption of universality, in any of its associations, will not society as a whole be getting out of hand altogether? May we not be confronted with literal demoralization and consequent disintegration in the very hour of the increasing effectiveness of external techniques and instrumentation?

This question simply echoes the oft-repeated judgment that material progress has far outstripped moral discipline. One recalls again the doubt whether the changing from communal to associative terms of living is not literally abnormal, contrary to human nature, and constituting an overstrain which humanity cannot bear. Obviously, if humanity is not capable of making the change, there is no

remedy but to seek to go back to some authoritarian principle of communal society.

More and more, then, as gains of civilization fail to produce social cohesion, as a federalized society proves the lack of a sufficient principle of unity, is an invitation placed before some association with power and a sense of responsibility to attempt the integration and control of the human situation. The two natural contenders for this role, in view of their histories, are the church and the state.

In recent years, it must be admitted, the state has shown the greatest inclination to attempt this role — and indeed possibly the greater capacity for leadership, whether authoritarian or spiritual. Characterized as the church is by the intellectual unoriginality and vagueness and by the moral indecisiveness of its dominant popular religion, and vexed as it is by evolution in different directions at the same time, its inadequacy as a center of the reintegration of society has often been pointed out. When the church's associative tendencies have permitted it to achieve greater ethical sensitiveness and to make pioneering advances beyond common standards, the danger has been that her moral superiority might reflect merely the code of a select group, not the general habits of a people. The rather ridiculous failures of the church when under such circumstances she has adopted " pressure group " tactics and tried to enforce minority standards upon an unconvinced age, are painfully familiar.

Nevertheless, by reason alike of its inalienable sense of origins in a supra-mundane social world and of its genius and history, the church simply cannot give over its responsibility for the control of civilizations. She has grave cause for doubt whether any other association possesses or may hope to possess the access to the springs of human life or the compelling and controlling common symbols of unity

and order which she herself has. The church simply must make good its universalistic assumptions — and that without compulsion — otherwise she will probably be compelled to surrender social control to a compulsive state.

It is obviously unfair at this point to draw the contrast between the church and that strangest caricature of the corporate interpretation of life, namely, the romantic totalitarian state in its insane attempt to make neighborhood blood-brotherhood the basis alike of nationality and of religion. Because the clan families of the primitive horde constituted kinship groups, totalitarianism has to erect a false and pretentious theory of race and to presume that a modern national civil society can be based on such primitive relationships. Under this pretense, the church must be coextensive with and virtually undifferentiated from the folk, accepting and perpetuating the mores of the blood brotherhood. The church which cannot sink completely to the primitive communal level remains a thorn in the flesh of the totalitarian state.

There can, however, exist a very much milder version of the role and responsibility of the modern state — one quite compatible with the democratic political tradition — which equally raises the theoretical issue of relationships between it and the church.

Now there exists no democratic state today which has not gone far toward becoming the organ of idealistic concern for human welfare, going far beyond former political tradition. The state is increasingly concerning itself with the economic opportunities of its people seeking not merely negatively to restrain special privileges, but positively in considerable degree to equalize them through a variety of measures such as work relief, unemployment insurance, and old-age pensions. The late Walter Rauschenbush thought that the American state was already

" Christian " except in economic affairs. It has rapidly become " Christian " in this realm also.

Hence it is open, as never before, for good and loyal men to question whether the state is less omnipotent and effective — or indeed less sincere — than is the church at the same or similar tasks.

Considered more philosophically, one needs to appreciate what Professor Ernest Barker has shown in his paper on this same topic, that the state is an indubitably authentic creation of society, not a mere legal entity created by contract or legislation:

> It is a legal association, a juridical organization, which has been constituted from a previously existing whole. That whole is a people, nation, society, or community. When it becomes a state, or comes to be regarded as a state, this whole does not cease to be what it was. . . . It simply adds a different form and a new and separate mode.

Professor Barker goes on to argue that the main work of the state is, in fact, not compulsive, but rather

> for the most part " endorsement " or " taking over " — setting its *imprimatur,* the seal of its force, on what more flexible activities or the mere progress of life have wrought out in long years of adventurous experiment or silent growth. The community is thus a laboratory for the state.

Now, so long as the democratic state merely enacts what the authentic processes of the common life have established, what further limit need be set to its activities? It remains thus a possible dream of wise and holy men that most of the idealistic effort of society shall be done under forms of state action. In this dream the churches are united, along with other voluntary associations, to play a mere ancillary part. Of this attitude the impending possibility of a dominant WPA culture in the United States is sufficient evidence.

Speaking on behalf of the nonecclesiastical voluntary agencies of society, Professor Barker proceeds to declare:

> The community is also a laboratory for itself. It may hand over some of its inventions to be "endorsed." But there is much that need not be endorsed, and cannot be endorsed. There are things we can discover for ourselves, and do for ourselves, in the field of community life, which had better remain in that field, and indeed *must* remain in that field. The partnership in science and art, "all virtue and every perfection," must again and again run into the form of law; but it must equally, and even more, remain at point after point in its own fluid form — for otherwise science and art and virtue and perfection will be petrified in the form of compulsion.

When the church uses such arguments, its opposition to state action is often suspected of being merely the jealous reaction of an equally power-loving institution. To this — along with humble confession that it may at times have been true — a sufficient answer should be the church's ineffaceable conviction that she is somehow the appointed organ of the life and reign of God among men.

4. ELEMENTS OF A POSSIBLE SOLUTION

But is it at all possible to maintain so exalted a view of the church in the face of objective, stern realities? If, as in this paper, the church is viewed as a reflection of communities and nation and as a force in the world in competition with that of other organized associations, including the state, which neither theoretically nor practically admit the church's version of its own sanctions, what likelihood is there that the church will be able to play a really dominant role in the modern world, or that it can hope to effect the reintegration of society without resort to compulsion through spiritual force, when society has begun to go to pieces? Are there objective considerations which suggest any possible solution for its problems?

The prospect indeed appears hopeless from any consistent Catholic standpoint which identifies church and community on the communal level.

From the Catholic standpoint, one is born into the religious community or becomes a member thereof automatically by the accident of living within its bounds. It does not consist of a voluntarily constituted group of individuals as an association does. Following the communal clue, the Catholic baptizes into the church anyone born into the Christian community of which the church is the religious aspect of the common life. Thereafter, one remains a Christian in status and, unless excommunicated, the church will bury him according to its offices of the church, declaring that he has died in the faith.

Now it would not be impossible for the Catholic to borrow Professor Barker's argument as previously cited, and to maintain that a people, nation, society, or community might incarnate itself in a church quite as truly as in a state, as a different form and new and separate mode of a more primitive social reality. This is indeed essentially what the Catholic believes ought to happen, under divine appointment; and, on the strength of the ubiquity of popular religion, the all but universal indirect adherence of the total population to the church, and the partially expressed assumptions of law and custom that this is a Christian nation, it would in the past have been quite possible to hold that this is what has actually happened.

But the social process has gone too far in dislodging men from their communal ties to make this position practically tenable. Social interpretation, as has been seen, is inclined to break up society itself into loosely federalized units. There is no actual entity corresponding to the words " people " or " nation " which could incarnate itself as a church. The immense gains of the associative princi-

ple as the actual basis of social organization are all against the church's hope to realize such a role as to be a people's other and better self, or as that of the " nation on its knees."

But the situation appears equally hopeless from the individualistic Protestant viewpoint. The manifestly communal roots of popular religion go far too deep to make it sociologically defensible to trust in the relation of the single soul to God, or to regard the church as something which one can take or leave at will. Neither religion, nor any other major interest, can hope for a solution of its problems in individualism alone.

Now it should be noted that in none of its classic expressions is Protestantism individualistic. Either it seeks to establish the political rule of religion through a Christian state, as it does in its more churchly version, or, in its sectarian phase, it strives for a society of holy men maintained through methodical discipline. In short, historic Protestantism, quite as much as Catholicism, makes religion essentially corporate. Thus, quite accurately, the Church of England in the Prayer Book controversy reminds Parliament that the church is no mere voluntary association but quite as basic a part of the national life as the state itself. The essential difference is that Protestantism defines corporateness on the associative rather than on the communal level.

It is sound Protestantism as well as good sociology to realize that none of the great associations of mankind originate specifically in the will of man, but rather in the organic wholeness of his social nature and the inheritances of the social process to which he is subject. His associations are not combinations of social atoms, either of men who first privately arrive at significant experiences or of interests on behalf of which they subsequently associate. On the contrary, all the great associations are themselves

personality-creating bearers of the social heredity. Culture is as inevitably inherited as any organic characteristic. From these antecedent social factors the impulses of individuals are received, their characters are derived. In being increasingly transformed into association, the church does not escape from its ancient roots in the corporate social order; and this, whatever their legal status, is equally true sociologically speaking of the American churches collectively as of historic established churches.

When all this is said, however, it is still conspicuously true that Protestantism puts its main hopes for religion in the less inevitable social characteristics which identify association. It insists on ultimate voluntary personal acceptance of the inherited religious position; upon religion as inwardly distinctive; upon its unique and separate supremacy; also upon its compatibility with questioning and change and upon its demand for intelligent loyalty. In these considerations the dynamics of Protestantism will always be found. It can at the same time consistently accept vast backing from the authentic though static influences of tradition which are actually present in American popular religion as exemplified in the life of the actual churches.

All this is but to say that objective grounds of hope for the church's dominant role in social integration are to be found, first of all, in the manifoldness of the contemporary social processes. Evolution itself is not entirely consistent. It is not moving in merely one direction. The forces behind its major trends are not inexhaustible and the more primitive principles of association are not utterly abandoned to more recent ones. Surely if this mixture of forces can co-exist in the community itself they can also do so in the church.

Institutionally speaking, the church is by no means

down and out. Its striking numerical growth, the fact that its institutional strength is now at the peak, at least in the United States, reflects a situation which is partly stable and partly changing, and in which both stability and change are at least in part on the church's side. In other words, the church continues to utilize both communal and associative principles of social organization. Not infrequently it binds the same person to itself in both the aspects of his nature which are reflected in these two principles.

That apparently dominant trends are not inexhaustible is shown, for example, in the fact that the breakdown of the neighborhood is already largely over. As the first effects of acute mobility have expended themselves, after much shifting and sifting, the neighborhood, with some loss of significance, largely survives — just as all the aspects and major arrangements of social life are likely to survive. Urbanization, in fact, has by no means reached all city people. Multitudes still live in racial colonies and ghettoes, and by reason of habit and ignorance are still locality-bound. The hold-over of rural-mindedness keeps still others to a narrow round of social and ethical relationships. Clannishness is diluted but not abolished.

One of the best illustrations of the incompleteness of the shift to any principle of association is to be found in the highly conventional character of the work of the Protestant ministry. This takes virtually the same forms, expressed in about the same proportion in country, town, and city. Such a result is, indeed, intelligible with respect to the majority of churches which are too feeble or too traditional to modify themselves even under acute social pressure. It may also, in large measure, be due to the fact that most ministers are of humble origin, rurally bred, that they have spent most of a brief average career in rural

churches, and have never really gotten the hang of the city. Nevertheless, the fact that under the intensest impulses of urban environment, where innovation is most loudly called for, the continued exercising of the priestly office, preaching, pastoral work — along with the running of churches as a business enterprise — continue to constitute the chief block of the minister's work (exactly as they do in the country parish), tends to show how deep are the church's roots in traditionalism and how profoundly it is justified in depending upon traditionalism as a major support.

Looking further afield, it will probably be concluded that most of the failures of advanced associations — for example, the failure to utilize specialists in government; the predilection of the American people for untrained politicians, poorly trained teachers and preachers; the administration of local government on personal rather than legal lines; the habitually low estimate put upon the services of experts — all these and much else merely indicate the survival of undifferentiated communal traits as the basis of society, in contrast with its effective organization through the differentiation of special functions and interests.

Part at least of the church's own salvation, as well as the likelihood that it can rally society about it, lies in the survival of such traits against the more recent trend. The sway of popular religion, with its robust, vulgar acceptance of supra-human postulates, and the common adoption of a quasi-Christian ethics, constitute at least a background for true religion, a case in which "he that is not against us is on our part." Common worship, even when it merely celebrates life without criticizing it, has an enormous integrating influence. Finally, philosophically speaking, there is something to be said for the authentic and con-

structive role of the less rational and more emotional elements in human nature against the attempt of man to live too exclusively on the plane of reason and deliberation. The church is wise to trust in its deep rootage in ancient communal soil, which has always nourished strong men and social groups.

Moreover, some of the consequences of social change and even confusion, Protestantism, on the associative level, definitely accepts as better than any actual alternative could be.

In the first place, the Protestant need not be unduly disturbed by the church's progressive loss of function. The fate of the modern church is often described as that of an institution which is steadily losing its former functions in competition with others. Specialization, it is said, has removed, one after the other, from beneath the hand and shadow of the church such crucial matters as the local administration of justice, education, and the practice of the fine arts. What remains to the churches is functionally a mere shadow of its ampler self. Pictured on a larger canvas, however, what one more truly discerns is a process of disentanglement from communal society of one function after another, and its erection into a separate institutionalized interest. In no true sense did the church ever have primary control of the functions alleged to be lost. It is true that, following the collapse of ancient civilization, the medieval Catholic Church became a sort of receiver for society, temporarily gathered up the whole range of community functions and attempted to administer them. In the longer perspective, this should be regarded simply as an episode pending a normal redistribution of functions to the institutions which were in process of evolving and which have since independently established themselves. The primitive Christian church certainly attempted no mo-

nopolistic control of functions of the community, and in the largest sense the church's alleged loss of function simply becomes part of the general problem of social differentiation and the relation of specialized interests and institutions within a more complex type of social whole.

Obviously more serious and challenging is the alleged failure of the church's common voice as a source of moral authority in the modern world. The church's social effectiveness in the face of the evils of the present social order is widely lamented. It is charged with institutional paralysis. Identification of the church and the world are thought to have gone so far that the salt has almost entirely lost its savor.

But this outcome, it is pointed out, is inevitable, now that the church is identified with so large a fraction of population. The church as sect may strive for purity and so long as it is small enough to exercise intimate discipline may secure at least the purity of outward conformity. The church as an inclusive major human association, as a voluntary movement rallying to its membership more than half the population, as it does in the United States, and receiving a certain nominal adherence from most of the remainder, actually receives within itself the moral standards of the population which it thus includes. From the standpoint of New Testament Christianity or of modern ethical sensitiveness, the average moral level is unquestionably and shockingly low.

But so long as religion was primitively identified with the community this same problem of the low moral level existed. It is only the church as an association, particularly in its sectarian form, which has ever been in position to set itself in contrast with the community and earnestly strive to attain, generally, a superior moral level. Now success in " evangelizing " the population on the voluntary

associative basis has created a novel type of ecclesiastical institution in the United States.

For whatever the origins, it is sure that the American churches in the main are no longer sects, but are rather institutional exponents of popular religion, constituting essentially a cross section of the community. In proportion as they have succeeded on this basis, internal discipline has become lax. And so great a variety of moral attitudes has become included within its borders that it is impossible to line up the church as a whole behind any particular ethical idea or requirement except the very most conventional. Little trace is left of the divine institution which by virtue of the assumption of its theocratic origins sought to dominate life. Especially has it become difficult for the church to exhibit an internal quality of life fit to serve as a principle for organizing the whole life of humanity.

Yet even this state is better than to have no half-leavening of the nation by popular religion which, indeed, always falls below the ideal, yet can always be appealed to as against its own low levels. There is at least a theoretical admission of the higher standards; and popular religion is always ready to admit the discrepancy when its deficiencies are pointed out. Rigorists, who argue that a church of the "saving remnant" utterly disassociated from the world would be in a stronger moral position, rarely consider what kind of world it would have to contend with if society were not already largely diluted by Christianity.

Finally, Protestantism can even afford to put up with the notorious lack of cohesion within the church itself in order to gain the still profounder advantages of thoroughgoing differentiation in religion.

When the church's institutional development is not on

behalf of specialized interests, such as worship, evangelism, education, benevolence, or missions, it chiefly reflects differentiation according to the age, sex, or status of its constituents. There must be a rerendering of every interest and almost of every value for every age, for children, adolescents, young adults, women's organizations rise to duplicate the general organizations of the church. Clergy and laity differentiate their interests and develop separate, often parallel organs. Virtually every secondary institutional aspect of the church thus wears a double qualification; it organizes the missionary interests of women, the recreational interests of youth, the financial interests of boards of trustees, the professional interests of clergymen, etc. There must be religion for the preschool child, religion for the man over sixty-five. Veterans of future theological wars must separately indulge in anticipatory battles. Finally, the infinite detail of religion obscures religion's self. One cannot see the wood for the trees.

But all this subdivision, by interest and by age, sex, and status, does not mean merely that the church as an institution is being overorganized; it means that religion is, so to speak, being aerated. By such a breaking up of its particles, they are brought into maximum exposure to the atmosphere of reality and relevancy. Unquestionably the most general diffusion and circulation of things religious, the greatest lay participation in the church, the widest contact of religion with life, is wrought in this way. At least, like it or not, this is contemporary Protestantism's way.

However, no complete or well rendered expectancy for the church's dominant place in the community can with any certainty be derived from the mere survival of undifferentiated communal quality in popular religion and just as little from the negative successes of the associative

principle. And the issue is not whether and for how long traditionalism will support ecclesiasticism, or whether matters might not be worse for the church than they are. The issue is whether the church has energy enough to save the demoralized world from falling back into chaos and whether she can reinstate religion as the central integrating force in society — something which has never yet been done on the large scale of modern society and under conditions of intellectual and political freedom.

The leaven of the associative processes is, however, working in certain more originative and constructive ways. No one of them by itself may be conspicuous, but all together they should serve. The church, for example, has a right to rely heavily upon the growing use of the technique of democratic processes expressed in forums, discussion groups, etc., which subject traditional religion to free examination and attempt to work out its modern implications, especially with reference to the community. Directed, as these processes may be, to the very problems of church and community which this paper is discussing, it is possible that they may discover how to combine religion as a special interest operating at the level of deliberate association with appreciation of and concern for the totality of community life. The common viewpoint, then, which has been abandoned on the level of instinct and tradition, thus comes back on the higher level of intelligence and ethical sensitiveness.

In a more distinctly religious atmosphere, the contemporary church is also developing a large number of intimate groups which by personal confession and discipline are seeking to associate their members in the terms of the deeper forces of their personalities. They unite with one another in conscious desire, not as specialized fragments of humanity, but in a profound attempt to integrate their

common approach into an adequate experience of life under religious postulates.

The number and variety of these "groupers"[6] is far greater than is sometimes suspected. In the United States, for example, one may point to a fellowship of young liberals who think that their "radical rethinking of what constitutes reality in human life" has resulted in "a rediscovery of the fact that the reflection of this reality . . . is never private but most deeply social." They believe that the intimate processes of the life of the small group "can arrive at points which represent common agreement which may well mark the beginning of new departures and thrilling disagreements." Relying on this "deeper harmony of human minds and more effectual cooperation of human wills" in such a group, they hope "to give a chance to ideas and disciplines which represent discovered truths." "The religious man," they say, "is he who, through the stimulation and help of a group and a tradition, arrives at a belief as to the nature of God and who, on the basis of his belief, adopts a definite discipline which promotes growth." The church is "the social context out of which a generally accepted and progressively growing conception of the nature of reality may emerge." Here, then, are the faith, the fellowship, and the discipline, all corporately arrived at, yet in no way fixed or beyond continuous modification by the processes which brought them into existence.

These young liberals have not explained how they expect to piece out their objectively limited religious society into something pure, continuous with the historic church and the whole creative process of religion, and universal in

6 Excerpts from papers presented at the Ministers' Institute, September, 1934, summarized in *Unitarian Faces a New Age,* Report of the Commission of Appraisal, 1936, pp. 201–3.

present scope and power. But these problems confront the church under any conception of it, and the seekings of many intimate groups springing up throughout the church may well be expected to find fresh vitality and authenticity in religion on the associative level.

One may also risk much on the conviction that no generation will be left without its true prophets through whom "higher religion" may exercise a genuinely creative and constructively critical function toward both the church and the community of which they are a part. Nothing in the objective situation can guarantee the timely appearance of such prophets in the hour of the church's necessity, yet God has never left himself without a witness; and what can be more obvious than that the church and society can neither undergo inevitable break with the past, nor meet the strain of the demands of the new age without complete disintegration unless they are creatively reinforced as religion has so often been reinforced in past ages?

Given then a wide diffusion of democratic processes throughout the church, the development of a large number of intimate groups seeking light and fellowship, and the providential emergence of creative leadership, it is not too much to hope that fresh values may begin to pour forth from ancient forms. Common worship, for example, is the essential activity of the church as a social body. Its instinct and tradition are essentially communal. Its aspiration links all worshiping assemblies and all spiritually sensitive souls, uniting the whole family of God on earth and in heaven. It draws broadly on the total religious inheritance of the race, dramatically supplies a noble frame of reference for religious imagination to build upon, and is climaxed by its distinctively Christian ideas and symbols. Because of its thus essentially integrative character, it is the supreme corporate function of the church.

Yet all this notwithstanding, worship may fail to rise above the communal level. As already said, it may be content to celebrate without criticizing life. In its associative ranges, however, worship has developed a searching quality in the Christian church. One of the specialized functions of worship is to compare and criticize the totality of experience in the light of the distinctive Christian emphases. Worship may be merely a mass function. On the other hand, it may become a conscious process of regrading values, and among the aspects of religion that worship needs most frequently to revalue is itself. It should ever seek a greater capacity to discover its implied larger meanings, as well as to evoke a more powerful integrative climax in the worshiping group. This evaluator role needs, moreover, to be carried over into private and household worship; and it must be continuous if common worship is to remain really a stimulus, not an opiate, to the church in the modern world.

The growing discontent on the part of ethically sensitive souls with the experienced consequences of the present social order, is beginning to develop within the church as well as outside it all sorts of groups of pioneers and adventurers. Some of them would draw the line sharply between the church and the world, forgetting secular saints, who have gone outside the church to fight essentially a common battle. Others appreciate and attempt to realize the possibilities of unity in variety. They are unwilling, for formal purity's sake, to run off into sectarian separations from contemporary life and from the confessedly deeply compromised church — which after all is compromised just because it is so profoundly rooted in the community. But whatever tactics these moral radicals employ — and it would be a happy omen if more of them could get together in program — they constitute one of the most promising resources of the church today.

A still more positive claim than the one suggested in an earlier section may properly be made for the value of the church's attempt to make religion relevant by differentiation.

Religion becomes relevant and applicable to life as lived and just in proportion as it evolves limited objectives which may be served in specific ways. This constitutes a sort of repeated decentralization of religious interest. The totality of religious reality suspended in solution in common worship precipitates in the separate concern of the church. This illustrates intellectually and practically the familiar principle of the division of labor. Man has made all of his progress by splitting up the complex universe into manageable bits for secondary attack. Thus he makes progress in religion. The church with its institutionally developed, separately departmentalized interests is just the application of this method, each interest with its day, season, or occasion.

But the Catholicity of Protestantism is just its willingness to form a new committee or to erect a new unit of permanent structure for the service of the last interest which may differentiate itself and up to the last ramification of gradation in religion. The problem of Protestant organization is patiently to reintegrate today what was divided only yesterday, and to keep the total integrative functions as active and effective as the differentiating ones. And in point of fact, both in the local churches, and on national levels, denominationally and interdenominationally, a vast proportion of Protestant energy is now going into reorganizations and unifications. Marked centralizing tendencies are under way within many of the looser-organized denominations.

The continuousness of this process of differentiation and reintegration explains why the church is always re-

minding some people of a factory slowed down for reconstruction or a business closed for alterations. "Why," ask pious souls, "this repeated loss of momentum while tinkering with ecclesiastical machinery?" The answer is obvious: If the church's re-evaluation of its own interests is to be broken, if its self-criticism is to be constant and relentless, if every movement of differentiation is to be matched by one of integration, then the church must be forever making external institutional alterations. Probably on the whole, the most convincing evidence of its vital thinking is its changes in established institutional structure. The function of thinking is to solve problems, but not until the new idea has compelled tradition to move over and give it structural place. Not until it has implemented itself with adequate agencies, is the problem really solved. What worship does symbolically and emotionally to integrate religion, the church does sociologically through the continuous reorganization of her institutional functions, not through the ebullitions of more advanced clergy.

Now, while Protestantism is congenial with and on the whole committed to this method of perpetually bringing additional differentiated aspects and segments of life under the interpretative sway of religion — staking its future on the capacity of the process to reach universality — it manifestly cannot go on indefinitely with a mere process of differentiation balanced by reintegration. Religion must be relevant to life as a whole. In order to make itself so, religion has first to manifest the wholeness of life to the world.

Protestantism, accordingly, needs to make perpetual fresh effort to achieve the Catholic mind and temper. If the modern world is to find unity, some agency must offer a viewpoint focal enough to synthesize contemporary life

on the religious level and must express it in compelling religious terms. Religion must recover the universalistic note. It must learn to integrate the organized life of the world without coercing its variants into conformity. This is the supreme intellectual, aesthetic, ethical, and technical task of the age.

But these things, which go far deeper than our strivings on these planes — who, then, is sufficient for them? What can really guarantee the integration of life as a whole about the distinctively Christian elements in religion? While the church's life is so palpably a series of Christian fragments, there can be no external guarantee. The distinctively Christian elements must somehow be able to make themselves central in competition with others. In this effort they have the enormous backing of the Christian social tradition which seeks ideally to sum up all things in Christ. But this heritage itself is subject to a social process within which there are all manner of tendencies, bad and good. Unless, then, God energizes within the process to secure the supremacy of the Christian elements, integration may conceivably take place about some other center. But it is the very essence of the doctrine of the " indwelling Spirit " that results according to the will of God will creatively emerge into objective being. If God does continuously so energize, then by virtue of this immanent divine life the church may not alone fulfill a fundamental role in social causation as the leaven within the lump, but realize as well the final dream of religion — that of a social process for ever incorporating the body of Christ into the life of humanity.

If we seek objective grounds for this faith, we find backing in the discovery that human nature is manifold, corresponding to a varied universe of which it is a part. That all things are summed up in God, accordingly, remains

forever an affirmation of faith. That the values which religion seeks to incarnate are supreme values is itself a judgment. That social disintegration can be stopped, and that social control can be achieved in harmony with human freedom — in brief, that any of the values which ought to be ascendant can be made ascendant without physical coercion, is substantiating a thing hoped for but not seen. Secular idealism cherishes its own version of all these assumptions, and is essentially on the same footing with the church with respect to the roots of them. The two idealisms will do well, therefore, if they can get together.

Summing up finally the case of the church in the modern world, one finds it entangled by sociological necessity, and in the province of God with a half-Christian community from which it is able, in some degree, to disentangle itself to specialized attention to its own field. Here it can develop critical detachment, spiritual insight, ethical sensitiveness, and flexible loyalties. At the same time, it is fortunately unable to break its more conventional communal ties. The church's prospect is, then, that it will persist for a long time, perhaps permanently, in an equivocal position. It will share the manifoldness of human nature and the complexity of existence. Its victory will lie in its continuing confidence in the force and relevancy of its message applied to particular situations, in no one of which is it ever wholly successful, but in no one of which does it ever wholly fail. This victory is based, as it believes, on the congruity of the Christian religious objectives and insights with the objective facts of the universe and the corresponding basic needs and undying aspirations of man.

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